

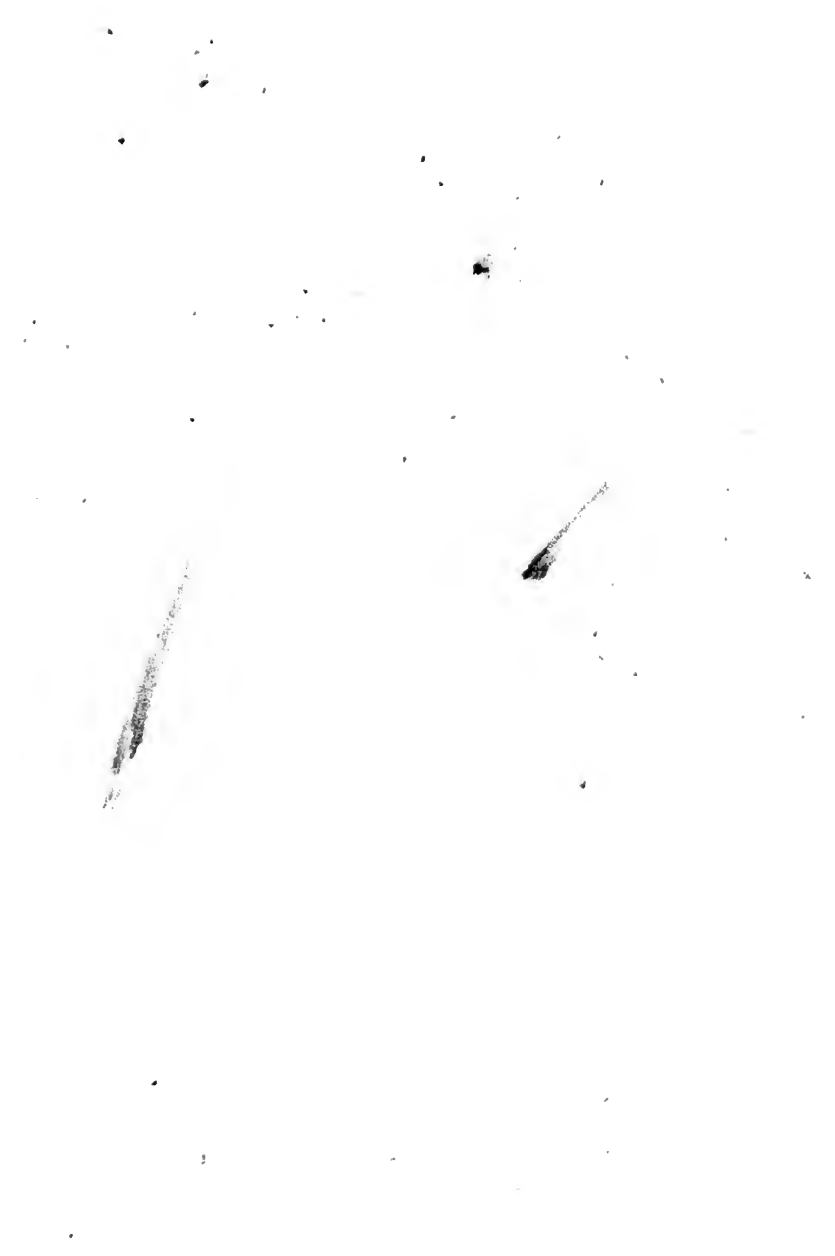
A
STORY
WITH A
VENGEANCE

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AN "ELIGIBLE SITUATION" IN REGENT STREET.

A STORY
WITH
A VENGEANCE;

OR,
How many Joins may go to a Tale.

INSCRIBED TO THE GREATER NUMBER OF RAILWAY TRAVELLERS,
AND DEDICATED TO THE REST.

BY ANGUS B. REACH AND SHIRLEY BROOKS.



SECOND EDITION, REVISED,
With a Frontispiece and Ten Cuts by Smith.

LONDON : NATHANIEL COOKE,
MILFORD HOUSE, STRAND.

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THE
FIRST-CLASS CARRIAGE.



O-DAY'S paper, gentlemen, paper?—Evening paper? just out. Morning paper? third edition. This week's *Punch*? Sporting paper, *Bell's Life*? Paper, gentlemen?"

And the bundle of editorial wisdom crying out aloud on the platform of the London terminus to the Great Western Railway passed on under

the arm of its peripatetic publisher. He was stopped by two or three voices from a first-class carriage, which was going "all the way" to Exeter.

Four gentlemen held out four sixpences, and de-

manded four copies of the *Times*. According to English custom, each looked and spoke as utterly unconscious that any other person was making the same demand as himself.

Not so a fifth, who, while the vendor of news was selecting his journals, said,—

“Then give me some other paper, which I can by and by have the pleasure of exchanging with one of these gentlemen. *Punch*! thank you.”

The other four gentlemen looked at the speaker.

“A-hem!” said one, mildly.

“Ah!” said a second, regretfully.

“Well,” said a third, dubiously.

“Yes,” said a fourth, frankly.

So said No. I., “the *Chronicle*.”

So said No. II., “the *Herald*.”

So said No. III., “the *Post*.”

And the journals were severally handed in and opened in all their amplitude, making a couple of ramparts of print across the carriage.

“Dear me, how dreadful!” said the *Chronicle*.

“What, what?” chimed in all the other journals.

And the *Chronicle* read in a tremulous tone—

“SECOND EDITION.

[BY ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.]

DREADFUL ACCIDENT ON THE GREAT WESTERN
RAILWAY.”

“Oh! oh! oh!” groaned all the other journals.

“It’s in mine, too,” said the *Herald*.

“And mine, too,” said the *Post*.

“And mine, too,” said the *Times*.

“Pray let one of the gentlemen read it aloud for

the benefit of the ladies," said a middle-aged lady plainly dressed. The other two ladies will appear immediately. Meantime the *Chronicle*, in right of having been the first discoverer, read as follows:—

"Intelligence has just been received of a most dreadful accident to the 2.0'clock P.M. Exeter express train. The train was proceeding at its usual pace of sixty miles an hour, and passing round a curve, when the driver saw a cattle-train, which ought to have been further down the line, not a quarter of a mile ahead. With incredible presence of mind he blew the whistle and turned off the steam, the guard screwing on the breaks with extraordinary vigour; and such was the effect of these prompt measures that the buffers of the express engine only gave a quiet rap to those of the last carriage, which was full of oxen of the Hereford breed, and which set up a dreadful lowing. We are happy to add that nothing was injured in either train, the passengers or the cattle."

"Bah!" said all the journals together.

"But it might have been dreadful, you know, if the driver of the express hadn't observed the cattle-train," observed the *Chronicle*, anxious for the credit of the item of intelligence which he had discovered.

"I call," said somebody else, "upon the gentleman with the *Herald* to soothe the nerves of the ladies by reading something from that deliciously soporific journal. It will be as good as laudanum."

But there was a universal shout of "No, no; no *Herald*—no *Herald*."

"Well," said the suggestor, "surely something unexceptionable for the ladies might be found in the fairy-like columns of the *Morning Post*?"

"Hem," said the proprietor, "yes, some very interesting fashionable intelligence here. For example:—

"It is whispered in the ranks of the *crème de la crème* that the Right Hon. Lord Tomnoddy, abandoning those amiable little eccentricities for which his Lordship's name has been celebrated in immortal verse, is about to lead to the hymeneal altar the Honourable Miss Arabella Victoria Eugenia Mountjoy Delaville Fitzflathers. It is said that the lady is an heiress."

"Rubbish!" said the middle-aged, plainly dressed lady.

"Well, then," pursued the Postman, "here is a wedding at St. George's, Hanover Square, with six and thirty bridesmaids all dressed in tulle lace and pink satin ribbons, pearls and diamonds. Three fathers and three mothers, all of them being dukes and duchesses, for each of the happy couple; and the service was performed by their Grace the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, assisted by the Bishops of London, Oxford, and Winchester."

"They ought to be well married with such an ecclesiastical force," suggested the gentleman with the *Times*.

"The ritual must have been most imposing," said a meek gentleman, of whom we will hear more presently.

"Humbug," said the gentleman with *Punch*; "these absurd displays ought to be put down. Why didn't they go and get married before the registrar? It only costs five shillings, when I warrant that wedding cost 1000*l.* at the very least."

"Sir, I agree with you," said the middle-aged, plainly dressed lady. "On all principles of economy, political and domestic——"

"Madam," said *Punch*, "as much domestic economy

as you like at home, but no political economy here, I beg."

"I think," said a young lady, plainly but very neatly dressed, and of whom we shall also hear again, "I acknowledge that I would rather be married standing before a gorgeous altar, in the centre of a splendid spectacle, got up without regard to expense, and full of grand effects of ecclesiastical music, and little bells that the chorus ring at the ends of the bars, like the coronation in the 'Prophet.'"

"Would you like an account of an elopement in high life?" interrupted the *Post*, changing the subject; "here's one of the Dowager Lady Gobbleyne, who went off on Tuesday last with her *chef*, M. Anatole de Soyerville. Her friends are in despair."

"For the lady?" said the gentleman, who having slightly nodded over *Punch* laid it down.

"No," said the reader of the *Post*, "for the cook. It is stated," he continued, "that the happy pair are gone on a gastronomic tour round the world, beginning at Ostend for rabbits, proceeding to Strasburg for *pâtés de foie gras*, rushing to St. Petersburg for *caviare*, crossing Europe to Naples for maccaroni, proceeding to Constantinople for kibaubs, to Calcutta for mulligatawny, to China for birds'-nests and dog-pies, to Africa for elephant chops, to America for ducks, returning to their native land by Glasgow, in order to try the merits of sheep's-head and haggis."

"Really, really," said the middle-aged lady in the plain dress, "it seems to me that we could employ our time better than in reading such tomfoolery out of the newspapers. I have a work here in ms. of my own, the 'Mechanics of Social Unanimity' which——"

"I fear," said the Punchite, "that social unanimity will go against the discussion of its own mechanics;" a sentiment which, exciting a unanimous vote in the affirmative, the proposition was at once negatived, the middle-aged lady in the plain dress looking dreadfully fierce, and giving the 'Mechanics of Social Unanimity' a vicious push into the mystic recesses of her pocket.

For a while the conversation drooped, the newspapers were laid down, and a dignified silence ensued. The young lady who had not made a remark, but who had crochéd right on from the station, after many fidgettings and opening the window which she sat next, summoned up heart of grace, and fairly asked the other young lady to change places, as riding with her back to the engine did not quite sometimes agree with her. Of course the young lady appealed to, who was politeness and kind-heartedness itself, and who had been across the Channel to Boulogne in all kinds of weather without feeling the slightest qualm, could not be expected to care whether she sat with her back or her front towards what we are sorry to say the young lady in question called the "horses." The carriage again relapsed into silence; several gentlemen "made legs," indicating an intention, more or less definite, of going to sleep, while the middle-aged lady in the plain dress, whom we shall in future dignify by the more elevated title of the Logical Lady, which she fully deserved, took to reading Whately. The young lady who had changed places with her *vis-à-vis* was neatly, not to say piquantly dressed, a pretty-looking person, not very young, but perhaps younger than she looked, and with an air of languor on her pale features, produced a well-thumbed copy of the *Lady of Lyons*. It was a

good deal marked in pencil, and the lady seemed to apply herself to one person's speeches only. The third, a young and young-looking lady, charmingly dressed, drew her veil over her face, gazed out at the window, and appeared rather inclined to cry.

Away they went; but as the flight of a railway train has already been described once or twice in books, it is not perhaps necessary to be graphic (that is, we believe, the word) upon their progress. It is, however, right that merit should not go unrecorded; and it is pleasant to relate that, even after one of the most rapid of their rushes across a county, not one single person of the party laid his hands on his knees, shook back his head, as if he rather flattered himself he had driven that last bit well, and remarked, "Wonderful invention these railways, sir!"

But our party was composed of no ordinary material, as will be seen and confessed.

Dusk came on, and the modest little light in the centre of the roof began to shine out—the Star of the Locomotive. A voice came out of the gloom.

"That was a very good suggestion of yours at the terminus, sir," said the voice.

It proceeded from a stalwart gentleman, with a good broad forehead, very little hair (what there was of it was grey), a small greyish moustache, and a frock-coat buttoned up to his chin. He had what used to be called a military air in days when it was not a military man's most careful study to take care that civilians should not be able to recognise him: heroes have grown modest. The speaker, however, was not a soldier.

"You mean about the newspapers," replied the only person who had made any suggestion at all; and

who, therefore, naturally appropriated to himself the right to reply. He spoke in a light, ready, easy tone, and the Lady of Lyons, glancing up at him, thought that his voice and manner reminded her of Mr. Charles Mathews; but of course she reserved the compliment of telling him so.

"Yes," said the military-looking gentleman. "If we had not taken your hint, we should not have had a perfect club-table of journals."

"Union is not always strength," said the lady who was reading logic.

"Even a bundle of sticks is not strong," said the lady with Sir Bulwer Lytton's play, "when the sticks are actors."

It was smart; but the lady said it as if she had often said it before. It brought, however, a prompt laugh from three of the gentlemen. Already the party was civilising: its members gradually coalescing, the ice gradually melting, and something seeming sure to be coming out of the thaw,—something pleasant, and social, and agreeable,—that is to say, the unrestrained converse of English ladies and gentlemen.

The gentleman who about two hours before had remarked "A-hem!" now ventured to resume his observations. He was a young, clean-shaved person, with a white cravat and a clerical surtout, pruned and clipped away in the extreme of high-church fashion. He spoke very gently, and with something of a musical intonation.

"Perhaps," he said, "much good might be effected if we sometimes condescended to note what other people are doing, and if we aimed at general rather than individual action—under proper teaching and guidance, of course."

“Arian or tract-arian?” said his next neighbour, a round, merry-looking little man in black, with a large gold chain and seals, worn *more majorum*, depending from a fob; and who had a very suspicious-looking mahogany box beside him, which luckily no one present recognised as a case of surgical instruments. He said it in so good-natured a tone that it was impossible for the young clergyman to take umbrage. He smiled, and shook his head slightly; and though he declined taking any snuff from an enormous gold box tendered to him by the other, he took the box to show that he had not been annoyed.

“You can hardly see what is engraved upon it by this light,” said the owner; “but it is curious. It is a Russian production, and the design is some legend of the Greek Church.”

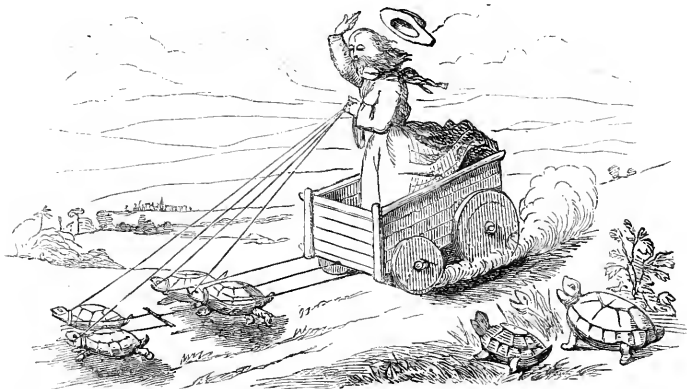
The clergyman rose and examined the box close under the lamp, he then returned it respectfully.

“It is the legend of St. Barneybogo,” he said; “he is not in our calendar, but his history may have weight.”

“His shrine has, you observe,” said the other, balancing his box on his fat forefinger. “But pray what was his history? He seems to be catching black-beetles here; a very excellent thing to do, certainly; but as he could have bought a trap for ninepence ——”

“They are tortoises,” said the clerical gentleman. “The saint wanted to go on a journey; but the enemies of his faith refused to allow him any horse or other animal to draw his carriage. In despair, he was about to give up his object, when he saw some tortoises crawling about. He caught them, harnessed them to the carriage, and sprinkled them with holy water; upon

which they became endowed with miraculous speed, and transported him to the end of his journey."



"Saints had carriages, eh?" said the merry-faced man. "That legend, I should say, was discovered by the dignified ecclesiastics, not by the working clergy."

"It must have been one of St. Barneybogo's tortoises that beat the hare in another fable—legend, I mean," said the military-looking gentleman.

"I don't know much about tortoises," said a neat, elderly gentleman with gold spectacles (he had said "Well" at the beginning of the journey, and since then had read the city article in the *Times* over and over again); "but turtles are of the same family; and I've known a turtle draw a saint all the way from Clapham to the Mansion House."

The clergyman laughed at this so heartily, that his companions concluded that he was not an admirer of Sydney Smith's "patent Christians."

“A hungry man at a Lord Mayor’s dinner,” he said, “illustrates Lord Byron’s line, by combining with

‘The rage of the vulture—the love of the turtle.’ ”

This mild joke having been duly applauded, the lady of the logic-book asked, *apropos* of miraculously rapid journeys, what time it was supposed they should reach Exeter.

“About three o’clock,” replied the gentleman who had read the city article through gold spectacles. “Exeter is rather more than five hours hence.”

“Five hours! and I can never sleep a wink in a railway carriage,” said the Lady of Lyons.

By a curious coincidence, perfectly justifiable in a book, every body declared that he or she laboured under a similar disability. Had a comic writer been present, it is more than probable he would have had the boldness to say something about the place for the “sleepers” being under the rails; but our travellers were fortunate enough to escape without that melancholy accident.

“Five hours to travel, and none of us able to sleep!” said the gentleman who bought *Punch*. “My name is Swalloper, and I have an offer to make.”

The young lady who had looked out at the window accidentally drew off a glove, and showed, sparkling in the lamplight, an engaged ring; but she could hardly have intended to hint that she was not in a position to listen to any offer tending to create a Mrs. Swalloper.

“I should rather have said an overture,” said Mr. Swalloper. “It is not exactly of an English character.”

“That is in its favour,” said the lady with the the-

atrical book, laughing, "for very few English overtures are worth listening to."

"*Opera Benedicti!*" murmured the clergyman; but he did not pursue the argument; perhaps because he remembered that M. Benedict's operas could hardly be called English.

"I was about to propose this," said Mr. Swalloper. "Here are eight people, every one of whom has shown a certain quantity of talent, and a readiness to amuse the others. We shall be shut up together for a great many hours."

"I know," said the Lady of Lyons, "you are going to propose that we shall all tell stories. Is not that it?"

"That, you see, has been done before, in the Canterbury pilgrimage, and a good many times since. But instead of all telling stories, what do you say to our all telling one story?"

"All speaking at once, as Dr. Johnson wished the children to say their speeches, that there might be more noise and the thing sooner over?" This was the merry-faced man's inquiry.

"That plan has its advantages, certainly. But mine is this. Let one of us (to be chosen by lot, or by acclamation, or by a *oui ou non* vote—only, unhappily, we have no bayonets to make the choice quite a free one—) begin a story, in any way he or she may please."

"I beg your pardon,—an original story?" asked the clergyman.

"I think it should be original, because we appear to be all people who read books a little; and out of a jury of seven, the chances are that one at least will detect an old tale, and be bored by it, which is against our object.

But the story might embrace some part of the narrator's personal experience, if the trouble of invention were not desired."

"But," said the military-looking man, "how would you combine all our narrative powers into one story?"

"In this way, if you approve it. Let us appoint a sort of chairman—I would say President, only that our chief is to show fair play—and let him have this single power. When one narrator has gone to a certain point, let the President call upon another to take up the story, and go on with it until the said President thinks it time to call on another, and so on until every body has contributed a portion."

"I comprehend," said the lady with the play-book. "But suppose the President stops you, for example, in the middle of a situation; just, let us say, as—as—Julius Cæsar is holding a pistol to the head of Napoleon Bonaparte, and commanding him to resign the crown of Madagascar; and I am told to proceed, how am I to know how to go on, and whether the pistol goes off?"

"That is your business; you have only to please yourself; and I should advise the President always to stop the speaker just when he is at a critical point."

After a good deal of canvassing,—for we English people like to know all about a scheme before we commit ourselves to it,—the party agreed to carry out the project of Mr. Swalloper. It found the more favour in that the darkness of the carriage would relieve some of the speakers of the embarrassment they might have experienced in finding themselves the centre of a listening group. The next thing was to choose a President.

"A lady, I think," said Mr. Swalloper, amid the applause of the other gentlemen.

“Certainly not,” said the lady of the play-book. “We are of a sensitive nature, and should get so interested in a good story that we could not stop the speaker, and he would have to talk all the way to Exeter.”

It was finally arranged that Mr. Swalloper himself should be the President, and should commence the story he had proposed, with power to cut himself short at his pleasure.

And thus he began.

THE PRESIDENT'S DONATION.



It was rather late in a beautiful afternoon during the height of the London season. Seven concerts were announced for that day, each *affiche* promising the whole available talent of both operas, besides a constellation of musical stars which had not yet shone upon the world of London, and each

programme offering performances which must occupy seven hours at least. The clusters of carriages near the crack shops in Regent Street were thick, and little regiments of long Jeameses lounged on the green benches at the shop-doors. The foreigners were out in great force, the pavement being in a desirable condition for their dubious boots, and they walked four abreast, dis-

playing every variety of moustache, grimace, puckered trouser, greasy hat, and general dinginess, in the enchanted eyes of the wives and daughters of *perfid*e *Albion*, and smoking the cheapest and worst cigars the Semitic Arabs manufacture. Dowagers, got up regardless of expense, sailed sternly up and down the street, scrutinising one another with an air between the manner of Rhadamanthus frowning on the bench of Hades, and that of a philosopher looking into a microscope. Pretty girls from fashionable quarters glided about in millinery of fairy-like finish, and with smiles lying ready, at the shortest possible notice, to soften the *hauteur* of their features. Men of all sorts were about, real gentlemen, in careless neatness ; fast men, with red eyes and flaming cravats ; elderly dandies, wonderfully made up, but a little stiff in the legs ; gents with a trayful of sham jewelry stuck over their shirt-fronts, and showy canes in their paws ; foreign singers, in black, but with one enormous diamond or emerald as a brooch ; and honest fathers of families, who, having dined at two o'clock, had taken out their wives and children to see " the smart folks," designing to return to tea and shrimps at five. The sun shone out brightly, glanced from the polished tops of carriages, brought out the innumerable hues of beautiful parasols, and glistened in the water-drops as they streamed from the tail of the cart which made its way backwards and forwards, laying the dust and splashing the kerb-stones. " I believe," added the President, " that is about the tone and manner of description supposed to be acceptable in these days, when the great secret of literature is held to be the telling people what they knew perfectly well."

Regent Street was at its fullest, and every body was

most completely on the *qui vive*; when a young gentleman, elegantly dressed, came out from Argyll Place, and turned down towards what used to be the Quadrant before the tradespeople spoilt it, under the futile pretext that while people could walk under cover, they walked about without buying any thing. It is not necessary to say where the young gentleman came from. He might have been meeting a young lady in the Pantheon conservatory; and, to avoid observation, might have come out at the Marlborough-street door, while she emerged from the front into Oxford-street. He might have been to the police-office to ask Mr. Hardwick to let off some other well-connected young gentleman with a fine instead of imprisonment, for having battered a policeman or some such *canaille*, in which case Mr. Hardwick had certainly refused the request. He might have been seduced by some of the fascinating poetry with which Doctor Culverwell daily allures the public to be cleanly—that new Bath Guide, who tells us of

“Limpid waves where violet odours breathe,
And silver floods translucent, in whose tide
Warm, sweet, and cordial, may the wearied frame
Drink a fresh draught of vigour.”

But as he had, in reality, been sustaining the character neither of lover, pleader, nor bather, I do not know that there was any particular use in my mentioning these possibilities.

He was certainly very handsome, that young man, and his bearing was decidedly that of a person accustomed to the best society,—a phrase which I do not at all understand, but it is supposed to convey a great deal. Every body who is kind enough to listen to me will be

good enough to conceive her or his *beau ideal* of what a gentleman of thirty ought to be. His height was rather above the middle stature, and his features were neither so Roman as to be stern, nor so Grecian as to be soft. He appeared decidedly good-humoured, but by no means spooney—I trust the word is not unclassical—and when I have added that his name was Percy Wyndham, I shall leave him to your own constructive imaginations. He is the hero of the story which I—which we, I mean, are going to tell.

“Thirty, you said,” remarked the elderly gentleman in spectacles, in a dissatisfied tone. “Too young to figure in any business more important than a dance or a duck-hunt. You should have made him fifty, and then he might have seen something worth telling.”

“But his age, like every thing else, is in my successor’s hands; should you be that individual, you can make him a hundred, if you like—it is only beginning, ‘Years rolled away,’” said the President.

“Oh! but I request that years will not roll away, at least until I have done with Mr. Percy,” said the lady of the play-book. “I don’t want a lapse of thirty years between the acts. It changes the whole interest of a piece.”

“Wyndham is a very pretty name,” said the young lady with the engaged ring; “but thirty is rather old—I mean, if there are to be any scenes in which the heart is interested.”

“I don’t know,” said the President, smiling; “but some authorities say that there is no such thing as a heart in any body under five-and-thirty. However, you can fall back upon reminiscence; let him recal what he was in those joyous but long-vanished days, when, fresh

from the hand of nature, his soul glowed responsively in presence of the holy flame—you know the formula.”

“ I do not think a novelist should be always laughing,” said the engaged young lady, sententiously. “ He is to represent life, and life is a misery and a long agony, into which green oases are introduced by fate, only with the malignant purpose of making subsequent afflictions seem more bitter still.”

“ There is a medical man in the carriage, ladies and gentlemen ; do not be alarmed,” said the owner of St. Barneybogo’s snuff-box. “ Perhaps the story had better go on.”

The President resumed.

Mr. Percy Wyndham, upon entering the street, gave a hasty glance at the persons at that moment before a particular shop, and then began to walk leisurely along, turning and coming back when he had proceeded a few yards beyond the shop in question. He was obviously there by appointment. For some time he merely walked up and down. Then he examined the contents of all the windows within his tether. Then he began to hate most of the people he met, and soon afterwards hated them all. Then he looked at his watch, and compared it with about thirty clocks, some in windows, some in shops. Then he took out a little note with pink edges, and looked hard at a particular figure in it, which was obviously 4, and could by no possibility be read as 5. Then he indulged in some private objections to the general character of woman, especially complaining that it was impossible for her to be punctual. Then he invented a number of excuses, one of which, he said in his bitterness, was at that moment being invented elsewhere to deceive him, as that a certain little watch had stopped,

and the time could not be known,—that an aunt and cousins had called,—that the heat of the weather had produced a sudden faintness,—that a driver had missed the way and gone round by Islington Green and Putney Heath,—that a dress wouldn't fasten behind, and could neither be got on nor off, and the servant was so stupid,—that 5 had certainly been what it was intended to write, not 4,—that he mustn't be cross, for she was far from well, and had a presentiment that she should go as poor Emma Woodford had gone,—that she was so glad to see him she couldn't stop to explain how she had been detained; and then he pulled out his watch again, and looked as furiously at the poor clocks in the window as if it was their fault that he was kept waiting. By this time his detestation for every body in the street amounted to positive rancour. Many persons had passed him several times, and he knew that he was worth looking at, and had been looked at; and they saw that he had been kept waiting more than half an hour. Was he a sort of person who ought to be kept waiting? He had known many very nice creatures only too glad to wait for him. And as for some boys who had assembled round a post, and looked him all over, as boys will do, every time he passed, he turned over in his mind whether he should go and thrash them, or go back into Marlborough-street and fetch a policeman to take them to prison. Really, ladies ought to be very careful how they keep gentlemen waiting, for the quantity of evil thoughts generated during the lingering of a disappointed appointed is fearful.

Suddenly a quick hand was placed upon Percy's shoulder, who starting round—a motion natural to most men under the peculiar sensation in question—found

himself stared in the face by a jolly, round-faced man, vulgar in appearance, but with a certain air of joviality which carried it off.

Percy muttered a "Confound him!" for Mr. Buzzington was an understood bore. He was possessed with a mania for inventing incredible facts and impossible rumours, and with a more abominable propensity still for sticking like a barnacle to a victim, and pouring into his ears a flood of his fabulous balderdash.

"Oh!" exclaimed this personage, "I'm so glad to meet you,—I always am,—and particularly when I have got a perfect store of intelligence, which has not as yet got into the newspapers. I see you're merely sauntering."

"I'm busy," said Percy; "and your intelligence is like Ferdinand Mendez Pinto's adventures, only more impossible. However, if you must annoy me by your *gobemougeries*, go on,—I'll not listen,—you'll speak to the wind."

"Ha—ha—ha!" said Mr. Buzzington. Meantime Percy, leaning listlessly against a lamp-post, fixed his eyes upon *the* spot, and held his watch surreptitiously in the hollow of his hand, while Mr. Buzzington began his long-winded inventions. The words fell like hail upon Percy, hopping off him; for his thoughts were on another subject, and they were not of the most pleasant. So Mr. Buzzington droned on until Percy's ear caught mechanically the name of Ben Disraeli, and he as mechanically listened. He heard as it were in a dream, only interrupted by starts and glances at *the* corner shop, something like the following string of veracious intelligence.

"Heard about Ben Disraeli? They say he's so dis-

gusted that he's given up parliamentary life. He made a sad mess of it with his budget, you know. Benjamin's mess was five times the size of the other messes—Stanley's mess, and Beresford's mess, and little Augustus Stafford's mess—so that the ex-chancellor is going to turn a—what?—you'll never guess!—an author? an actor? an engineer? a gold-digger? a *primo tenore*, now that Mario is done up and going away to Italy? Not a bit of it,—you're wrong all through. He's turning Rabbi, and he's sitting in sackcloth and ashes, which he has to do for six months, before he can be received into the 'peoplesh' again, and until his beard grows long enough."

On this intelligence Percy vacantly remarked, "It's extremely odd!" He was thinking of his Sophy.

"It is extremely odd," said Mr. Buzzington, delighted to hear that his story was so well appreciated; "but I say, Mr. Wyndham, there's likely to be a duel between two very distinguished persons, both first sons of peers. They were sitting in Bellamy's, and had," said Mr. Buzzington, with a torrent of winks, "been sitting there a jolly long time, when Lord Augustus said to Lord Robert, 'Bobby,' says he, 'what's the arms of your family?' 'A lance, a sword, and a battle-axe, crossed upon a crusader's shield, with the motto, *Cave adsum*. I don't tell you it in heraldic language, Guzzzy,' says he, 'because you wouldn't understand it, you know.' 'Oh, oh, oh, oh!' said Lord Augustus, 'your family arms ought to be a prime stilton, with a knife stuck in it, and the motto, *That's the cheese!*' In an instant, Mr. Wyndham, the sneering patrician was half blinded and half choked by a hot shilling glass of brandy and water—a shilling glass—I had it from the best au-

thority. Of course, after Lord Augustus had mopped his aristocratic face with a silk handkerchief of the first quality, there was an exchange of cards, and I dare say by this time one or other of the noblemen is weltering in his gore. Indeed I heard as much; for I understand they fought across Bellamy's table, after all the M.P.'s had put their hats on, with one bullet, like Kean and Wigan in Pauline."

As he concluded, Percy languidly revived. "I was in Bellamy's the whole of last evening and up to a late hour, and no such quarrel took place, nor was any such insult given. Furthermore, one of the viscounts you mention is in Constantinople, and the other is an *attaché* at the embassy of Timbuctoo."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Ferdinand Mendez Buzzington; "and the person who told me said he was present, and heard and saw all that took place. Well, from my heart, I hate liars, and I'll never speak to that individual again: it would be derogatory to my moral character. But you may be assured, Mr. Wyndham, what I am now going to mention I had from a better authority than the last."

"Hope so," growled Percy through his teeth.

"You know Mr. Albert Smith?"

"Albert Smith?—yes certainly," said Percy.

"Well, he's engaged in a spec of a most novel nature."

"I believe that," said Percy.

"And he's the man who can manage it," rejoined Buzzington.

"I know that," said Wyndham, emphatically.

"It's connected with Mount Blank," said Buzzington.

"Mont Blanc," corrected Percy; "what about

Mont Blanc? I hope Mr. Albert Smith has not tumbled into a chasm, or gone down the *Mur de Côté*."

"I don't know any thing about the Murey de Cotty," said Mr. Buzzington; "but I should say that neither the one nor the other specs you mentioned would be a good one. No, Mr. Wyndham, this is a speculation in ice."

"In ice?"

"Mr. Albert Smith, from what I hear, has taken a lease for fifty years of Mong Blang, above the snow-line."

"A lease of Mont Blanc above the snow-line! What on heaven and earth can any body make of such a property?"

"Now look here," said Mr. Buzzington in a persuasive tone; "ain't there four quarters to the earth, and with Australia and the diggings, five? Well then, how could the Europeans in India get on without ice to cool their pale ale? How could the Persians, and the Turks, and all them Easterns, cool their sherbet without ice? Wouldn't the lucky diggers, when they come to Melbourne, give five pounds for a wine-glass full of ice? Don't the Americans make their stomachs into small polar seas with ice? And ain't it very much the same with ourselves?"

"Do you think Mont Blanc could supply the whole world, Mr. Buzzington?" said Percy, smiling; for the absurdity of the thing amused him. But directly changing his tone, he started up, broke from his tormentor, and bade him good morning in a tone which induced Mendez Pinto, after a moment's hesitation, to respond, "Well, good morning—it's your own loss;" and forthwith went his way.

Percy paced moodily about for a minute, musing.

“He wouldn’t wait,—he wouldn’t be played with,—he had no doubt she was well amused elsewhere,—he would go home and write a cold note,—he would give her five minutes more, and not another second,”—and he took out his watch once more, and gave her five minutes, and then five more, because it wanted that time of five o’clock, and then five more, because if she had meant five after all, why ——. But she did not come. Yes, that is she. The very parasol—he stepped out. Pah! it was an old woman; and what right had an old woman to have a parasol of that pattern! Infernal coquetry in an old hag (the lady in question happened to be one of the handsomest and kindest of English matrons), who ought to know better. But he would go. And he actually stepped out again, intending to go, and considering whether he should begin his note with an indignant “Having waited more than three hours”—or a taunting “Doubtless a better and pleasanter engagement,”—when up drove a cab close to his elbow, and there was she!

Very pretty, charmingly dressed, and that was about all he had time to observe. He had hastened to open the door (with a feeling of wonder that she had not been set down in a side street, and so made their arranged meeting less obvious); and the instant he did so, the young lady in the vehicle placed something rather heavy very carefully in his hands.

“My dear Percy,” she said (the voice was so sweet), “take care of it till I come back.” And she pulled the door to; and at a sign from her, the watchful driver, who had not descended, drove off at a dashing rate, and

was in the Circus before Wyndham had well recovered from his first astonishment.

To be suddenly deserted in such a way, without a word of explanation, was something—would have been a great deal under other circumstances; but there was something else of much more pressing interest at the moment.

“Take care of ‘it,’” she had said. And what was “it” which had been suddenly placed in a fashionable young gentleman’s hands in the middle of Regent Street in the height of the season? Why—a BABY!

Yes, a real, live, crowing, cooing baby. In long clothes, too, very long ones—a cloak of some bright red soft stuff, much embroidered, which by no means concealed a perfect cataract of delicate white garments, of great amplitude, the outside ones marvellously decorated with eyelet-holes and lace edges, and other vagaries of loving invention. A hood of the same material, and a cap with a world of white ribands, made up into little bows, and in the middle a small face, habitually very white, but on the shortest notice transmuting itself, with many distortions, into glowing scarlet, and then instantaneously becoming once more white, smooth, and placid.

Babies, I believe, are a good deal alike; but some mothers profess to be able to distinguish babies of their own from those of other mothers. It is a harmless vaunt, and need not be treated harshly. But if there be any difference in babies, this one was a most favourable specimen of the manufacture. It was what, by a strange perversion of language, is called a most lovely infant.

This was a very nice present to put into a fashionable young gentleman's hands in the middle of Regent Street in the height of the season.

"A little dear darling!" murmured the engaged young lady.

Percy Wyndham had as much self-possession as most young men about town; and this is saying a good deal. But the situation in which he was placed was certainly unprecedented. A baby in long clothes!

He looked round, rather helplessly, as if hoping to find somebody to pass the baby to. But he saw nobody to whom he could offer it with any chance of success. There were the boys round the post, all alive to his situation, and obviously preparing to hurrah him. Five or six tall footmen were grinning from their bench in front of a shop, and three or four coachmen were doing the same from their boxes. But Percy was thoroughbred, and Johns and Jeameses, of course, were nobodies. But the next moment he saw approaching the Honourable Mrs. Fitzbattleaxe (Mr. Titmarsh's cousin), with her two charming daughters, Honoria and Adelgisa,—the whole family gifted with a delicious taste for lady-like sarcasm, not to say quizzing; and Percy had often enjoyed it at other people's expense. They had obviously made him out: it was too bad. He had thoughts of swearing that he had taken orders, and was holding the baby in the capacity of an officiating clergyman (the water-cart was coming up too); but a sort of cut-away coat and other difficulties occurred. However, the Fitzbattleaxes were too near for hesitation; he planted himself on the kerb, turned his back on the *trottoir*, and looked steadfastly at the other side of the way. They passed; the baby's face suddenly took one

of its red fits; but as Percy heard the titter of the Fitzbattleaxe girls, I think his face grew even redder.

An Irish beggar-woman came up with a gang of children, hired for her mendicant *tableau*.

"Och, the Lord's mercy be on ye, and the luck of the blessed day upon yer darlin' babby!" she cried, in a loud, hard voice. "Blessings on 'im; he's the very patthern and image of yerself; and the self-same age as the darlin' I've here; the saints and angels love it, and keep it from harm!" and here a sly pinch at the bundle of rags at her bosom caused a dolorous squeak. "Ah, thin, it's hunger that pinches ye, darlin', and so it does yer poor mammy. Bestow a trifle, kind gintleman, for the love of heaven, and of the dear babe in yer arms; long may it lie there and smile upon ye! Go to the gintleman, ye little devils, and ask him for a trifle, for the love of yer little brother and his own sweet angel."

The brats clustered round poor Wyndham, and their moaning appeal, above which rose the clamour of their pretended mother, elicited from the persecuted young gentleman some invectives, which made the passers-by stop and stare also. As he vainly tried to shake himself loose from his assailants, up came three more of his friends, men against whom his manœuvre on the kerbstone would have been unavailing. He was surrounded in a moment by Viscount Oswestry of the Guards, Effingham Lincoln of the Treasury, and Toddy Bopps of London in general, including every one of the clubs.

"Why, Wyndham," said Lord Oswestry, with the air of a man who has just made out a new fact in natural history, "this is a baby!"

"Thank you," said Percy Wyndham, making a desperate struggle at self-restraint.

"And, by Jove!" continued Oswestry, examining the poor child through his glass, "a very good style of baby too. My sister, Lady Nortonfolgate, has just been and had a new one; but this is out-and-out the stunningest. I congratulate you, old fellow!"

"But he should walk about with it," said Effingham Lincoln, thoughtfully. "And I think I have read that he should shake it up, or something, every now and then."

"A bet, of course," said Toddy Bopps. "We'll be your witnesses. Who's the other fellow?"

"Of course it's a bet!" said Percy, clutching at the notion, and wondering it had not occurred to him before. "Look at your watches, will you, for me, and remember the time."

"I don't believe it's a bet," said Lord Oswestry; "he looked so precious savage when he saw us coming. Come, Wyndham, upon honour?"

"Will you hold the child while I show you the terms of the bet?" said Percy.

"Don't!" said Toddy Bopps, who was usually rather keen; "there's no bet, or he wouldn't put the baby out of his hands. It's the father of a family taking his son out for an airing, and it does him credit. Here comes Mrs. Arlington and two of the Baxter girls."

"By Jove!" cried Percy, "this is too much."

And he broke from the guardsman and the clubman, dashed across the road, upsetting two or three of the still-clamouring Irish brats, and, dodging the carriages with wonderful skill, landed safely with his charge on the other side. Turning up Maddox Street, he paused to consider his next step, when he suddenly found himself confronted by an individual ——

“Whom,” said the President, “I request this gentleman to name; and then he will perhaps be good enough to go on with the history.”

“How should I know whom the young fellow met?” said the elderly gentleman with the gold spectacles.

“We don’t ask that,” said the President; “we only ask you to tell *us*.”

THE
CITY MAN'S SUBSCRIPTION.



HE gentleman in gold spectacles is seized with a sudden paroxysm of rubbing his forehead and pulling his hair. The continuation of the story must, of course, be inside, and he seems determined to have it out by the roots. At last he speaks in a strong, stern voice, a little pompous, and somewhat fat to hear.

The person whom Mr. Percy Wyndham with his

baby found himself confronted with was a fat gentleman with a white neckcloth, very loose about the throat, with snuff lying in the folds. Although the weather was so fine, he carried a somewhat pluffy umbrella,—he wouldn't have gone into an oven without an umbrella;

he was a prudent man, and looked out for the rainy day. The fat gentleman had a rather hard face, with a shaggy eyebrow and grey eyes, more, in fact, like those of a cod than a houri; they twinkled though, and there was a sharp, knowing smile, a touch of drollery and a touch of kindness pervading his physiognomy.

“ Ah,” said Pauline Deschappelles abstractedly, “ a heavy father.”

“ What’s a ‘ heavy father?’ ” said the clerical gentleman. “ I was not aware before that there was any particular race of male parents naturally disposed to ponderosity. I have not found any such statement in any work of physiology.”

The lady of the footlights gave a merry smile, and the President a grave one.

“ Ask Mr. Diddier, or Mr. George Bennett,” said the young lady, with a twinkle of her eye.

“ But I have not the pleasure of knowing either of these gentlemen,” murmured the mild ecclesiastic.

“ Oh, then, I’ll tell you in two words;” and she began to speak with great volubility. “ He is an old gentleman with grey hair, a white cravat very much rumpled, a rusty black coat, and mostly breeches and silk stockings, with buckles in his shoes. Then, he’s generally in distress. Sometimes he has a son who has turned out ill,—robbed a till, and then enlisted, and then deserted and got flogged. Sometimes it’s pecuniary: he can’t pay his rent, and there is a perfect brute of a man in possession, in the corner. But he has generally a dutiful daughter in a white frock, with a pink sash made very long, and a lily and a rose in her hair, who consoles him, and strokes down his old wrinkled hand, and says that the darkest hour is always that before the

dawn; and the heavy father weeps, and so does the dutiful daughter."

"Amiable child!" murmured the clergyman: "consolation from such a source is indeed sweet."

"Sometimes, again," the young lady continued, "the 'heavy father' is an old farmer, with a grey round hat, and homespun coat with big brass buttons, which he is always 'danging,' and a long flowered waistcoat reaching down to his knees, and corduroys and worsted stockings. Well, *his* daughter usually runs away with a fine gentleman with moustaches and a quizzing-glass; and the heavy father is lifting his trembling hands to curse him, when his old wife interferes, and says, curses come back on those who utter them."

"Most true," groaned Mr. Genuflex.

"And then the brother, who has been weeping in a corner, starts up and says,"—and here the young lady assumed an agricultural accent—" 'Doan't ye mind, feyther; I'll go t'end o' t'warld, but o'il find them oot. Where's moy hat and moy stick? What thof he have a foine coat on his back, o'il doast it for him. O'il let him know that the heart that beaats under a homespun waaistcoat is as good as'—and here he flourishes the cudgel, when the door opens, and enter the daughter on the gentleman's arm, and they fling themselves on their knees before the heavy father, and tell him that they're married, and that the gentleman has five thousand a year. Then, of course, affecting scene—reconciliation—blessing—*tableau*—curtain falls."

"Curtain falls!" exclaims the startled high-churchman. "Then these people are actors, and the 'heavy father' is a phrase of the play-house?"

"Exactly so," said the President. "Our fair friend

has most accurately depicted him. And now, sir," turning to the gentleman in gold spectacles, "be good enough to proceed with your part of the story;" which, after some preliminary hems and haws, the City man resumed:

The fat gentleman was Buffs & Co., the great treacle-house in Mincing Lane. Any body who knows any thing of the City would have known he was a "house." It's a magnificent thing, ladies and gentlemen, for a man to be a "house." I might, indeed, if the company pleased, here enlarge upon the elevating and civilising effects of commerce, and upon the interchange of those productions of different —

But here a perfect chorus of frantic opposition burst forth from the whole united mass of listeners.

"Plenty of stuff of that kind in any leading article," said he of the grey moustache.

"No prefaces to commercial dictionaries," grumbled the President.

It was only the lady who studied Whately who remarked, that the logical cause of the greatness of Britain ought not to be made to give way before false sentiment and flippant impatience.

The narrator, however, saw how the wind lay, and resumed in a resolute tone:—

The fat gentleman was Buffs & Co.; I never heard who was the Co., but possibly some information upon the fact may be elicited in the course of this authentic narrative. Co.'s, ladies and gentlemen, are of no inconsiderable advantage in the mercantile atmosphere—they steady a name as a tail steadies a kite. Well, Buffs & Co. —he signed Buffs & Co. at the christening of his son and heir, in the parish register, in the column headed

“Name of the Parent”—Buffs & Co. was a treacle-merchant, and his name was good, none better, in the City. He dabbled in all sorts of specs did Buffs & Co., but treacle is naturally sticky, and in the main he stuck to treacle. There was a sweetness in the atmosphere round his warehouse. Charity-boys had to be whipped out of it by the beadle; and once when the monitor of a class in the parish-school was lost, and an advertisement put into the *Times*, saying that if he came back he'd be forgiven,—the poor wretch never having done any thing,—he was found, after a week, lying in a corner of the warehouse of Buffs & Co., with the treacle running absolutely out at the pores of his skin.

“Curious fact that in a cutaneous point of view,” said the gentleman with the gold snuff-box and the anonymous case of surgical instruments: “will you allow me to make a note of it?”

“Certainly, sir,” replied the City man, and in the most business-like style proceeded: Buffs & Co. was one of your regular merchant-princes, keen at a bargain, jolly after the bargain was over. Knowing, gentlemen,—damned knowing—I beg pardon, ladies—could feel the pulse of the market with any body, and had a house on Clapham Rise. “Treacle Lodge,” he called it at first; but after he had got on in the world, he altered the name to “Molasses Hall.” Such was Buffs & Co., who now caught hold of Mr. Wyndham's button.

“Hillo, young gentleman!” said Buffs & Co., “glad to have fallen in with you at last. Eh, a baby! Ah, I see, invested in matrimony, and received the dividend. Good per-centage, I hope—eh? Capital specs doing, sir, in that line.—My head clerk, an honest old fellow, got married, and got twins.—‘Ha, Stump,’ I said, ‘one

wife brought two boys. Two hundred per cent on the outlay—eh? Ha! ha! ha!”

But Mr. Wyndham stared at Buffs & Co. He never remembered to have seen Buffs before, to say nothing of the Co., and so he stammered out—

“What! not remember me—Buffs & Co. Think, man, think;—that City dinner. Benevolent Society for Stuffing Three-legged Stools to make them easier for the Clerks.”

“Ah!” said Wyndham, beginning faintly to remember.

“You explained to me—bit of damned Latin, used in a speech by the Rev. Mr. Simony—something about a—ah! I have it—*exegi monumentum*. You told me that that meant, ‘I have eaten a monument.’ Well, I haven’t forgotten your kindness, you see. I told you then I’d put you up to something for your good; and now, got a child, more necessary than ever. How’s the mother—as well as can be expected? The baby is devilish like her. A fine fellow; just what you anticipated? eh? As per invoice?”

Percy Wyndham liked the old fellow’s tone; for after a moment’s thought, he burst into a laugh, it was half bitterness, against—you know who—and half perplexity; and he stammered out that the child had been put into his arms by,—he paused, and then added, he did not know who.

“Ah! ah! ah! put into your arms by—by you don’t know who? *Not* married, then?”

“Certainly not!” said Percy.

“Honour bright?” said the city gentleman.

“I have said it,” replied Percy, rightly angry.

“Ah, sly dog—sly dog—I see it all—I see it all.

But young fellows will be young fellows. I don't say any thing as to my own juvenility; although some day, perhaps, when we've got our legs under the mahogany, I'll tell you some old stories, that'll make the hair of you young fellows stand on end. Come now, ain't I right?"

"No, I assure you, you are not right, Mr. Buffs. Very far from it."

"Come now, tell me, do you know the person who left the child with you?"

Percy hardly knew how to answer this home-stroke; he was so annoyed, and at the same time so amused. He would not tell a lie—so he said,

"Yes, he knew the person—a young lady of the highest respectability, and to whom—" Percy stopped with a start.

Mr. Buffs made a provoking wait.

"Who," exclaimed Percy, vehemently, "is a merry sportive girl, and who has played me this trick, at which, I suppose, I must not be angry; but I'll scold her well, for all that. It's a horrible sort of thing to be left with such a creature as this."

"I think it's going to cry," said Buffs.

"Good heavens!" shouted Percy, shuddering at the very idea.

"I think," suddenly suggested the merchant, "I would leave it in a shop."

"Oh, absurd!" said poor Percy; "they are not so green as to take it in. A friend of mine, in a similar fix, once tried it, and got marched off, infant and all, to the station-house."

"An omnibus," said Mr. Buffs, doubtfully.

"Worse and worse," said Percy.

"The workhouse," said Buffs.

"I hate the idea," was the reply.

"Soph—, I mean the young lady who gave me the child—would never forgive me."

"Take it to the police-station, then."

"I don't like that, either."

"Invest it, then."

"Invest a child! how?"

"In the best market."

"Invest a child in the best market?"

"Invest any thing. I've a genius for investment. I'll tell you—invest it—on or in a friend."

A thought struck Percy; he remembered the unfriendly behaviour of Toddy Bopps. Why shouldn't Bopps have the trick played off on himself? He would get doubly laughed at. Bopps was a good-natured fellow at bottom, and would take care of the child; and yes, as soon as he saw Sophy, he would write to Bopps and send for the infant.

"Now, then, what are you dreaming about?" said Buffs, hitting his umbrella against the pavement.

"I'll adopt your last suggestion, sir."

"Admirable, sir—admirable, sir. It will be invested in an instant."

Percy stared at the investor of babies. The investor of babies stared around.

A Covent-Garden basket-woman passed. "My good woman," said Buffs, "my friend wants to go with me to the City, but babies are not in demand there; last quotations very low there; so if you want to earn a shilling, you can, by carrying this baby home."

The basket-woman liked nothing better, only she stipulated for the address. "Here's the address," Percy



said, scribbling something on the leaf of a memorandum-book, handing it to the basket-woman, and at the same time reading aloud, "Toddy Bopps, Esquire, Union Club,—from—he knows who."

"Union Club," said the basket-woman, "that's not much out of my way to Common Garden. Oh! he'll soon have it. I s'pose h'll be expecting it?"

"Frantic that it hasn't come before," replied Percy; "he's an uncommon father." And the basket-woman and the baby departed in company.

"Look you," said Buffs & Co., "there are two sorts of investments. If this were not a commercial, but a cannibal country, you could have realised a profit on that infantine piece of goods. But this being a commercial, not a cannibal country, you invest the cargo, so to speak, when you get it off your own hands. There are some speculations, young gentleman, from which you may expect profit. There are others in which the maximum to be realised is the minimum of loss. Come, here's a cab; jump in. I want you to go to the City. I told you I owed you a good turn, and what I owe I pay."

Almost mechanically, Percy suffered himself to be crammed into the cab. What had he done? That baby! *Her* baby! Of course, I mean "her" in a temporarily possessive, not maternal sense. Gone, and to Toddy Bopps! Gracious goodness! perhaps it was her nephew or her niece, or a friend's baby, or a — He was lost in melancholy conjecture, when Buffs & Co. tapped him on the shoulder.

"I said I'd put you up to a thing," he whispered, "a thing about the T."

"Turf?" inquired Percy mechanically.

"Turf!" replied Buffs & Co., with profound contempt. "No,—treacle. There's much, Mr.——"

"Percy Wyndham," said his companion.

"Not a good mercantile name," answered Buffs & Co. "West-endish, circulating-libraryish, three-volume-ish; in fact, wouldn't look well at the top of an invoice. However, Mr. Wyndham, there's much to be done in treacle."

"Indeed!" said Percy, hesitatingly; "you don't mean to insinuate that we could do any thing—in the casks—before they are emptied."

"Pooh, pooh, pooh! Talk like a man of business."

"But I'm not one," said Percy.

"Then learn to be. Of all the glorious characters so dear to the commercial spirit ——"

"Sir," interrupted the President with solemnity, "as your head I am sure is far from wooden, it is absurd in you to give us opportunities of hinting that the part of your body in question has been made out of the Board of Trade."

The City man bowed and resumed: You, sir, have described the West-end, because every body of consequence knows all about it. I shall not describe the City, because nobody of consequence knows any thing about it. Our friends traversed its streets, however. They reached Mincing Lane. They ensconced themselves in Buffs & Co.'s sanctum sanctorum. They had sandwiches and Madeira, which costly liquid Percy said was like bad sherry with old boots steeped in it. And then, under Buffs & Co.'s direction, his guest filled up a printed form lying on the table. Buffs & Co. was bringing out a treacle company. "The Grand United Philanthropic City, West-end, and Clapham New Town

Treacle and Molasses Importation Company. Capital, 1,000,000*l.*, in shares of half-a-crown a piece. Sixpence to be paid upon each share." Then there was the list of directors, the actuaries, the solicitors, the attorneys, and the medical referees, who sent estimates down to the country boarding-schools of the quantity of molasses and brimstone which the masters could give the boys with impunity; and next followed the prospectus; such a magnificent and seductive piece of writing that—having to tell the truth, made some money by the spec.—I read it so often that at last I got the best passage off by heart. Perhaps the ladies and gentlemen would like to hear it.

A dead silence followed, and on the principle of silence gives consent, the City gentleman went on:

"Thus we have proved by arguments, and reasons, and evidence, and fact, and fiction, which cannot be refuted, nor replied to, nor responded to (satisfactorily), by any of the great philosophers of the world, ancient and modern; neither by Aristophanes nor Dr. Bowring, Plato or Lord Brougham, Cagliostro or the Wizard of the North, Charlemagne or the Earl of Aldborough; neither by Bacon nor Hogg, Newton (the inventor of electricity), or Franklin (the inventor of gravitation); neither by Alexander the Great nor by Cardinal Wiseman,—that treacle produces qualities of the most varied and inestimable character. Its sweetness produces corresponding sweetness of temper; its placidity, when poured from one vessel to another, gives a lesson on the propriety of bearing with equanimity the ups and downs of life; while its qualities of adherence lecture on the duty of sticking to our different pursuits, our promises, and our wives. Thus, in a moral point of view, is treacle

cle a matter of the greatest national importance. Its principal physical quality is its saccharinity. And who amongst us, except those who are unfortunate enough to be reduced to the necessity of using a false set, has not a sweet tooth in his head? This of itself, gentlemen, proves the virtue of treacle, and also what I may call the aristocracy of treacle—molasses. Gentlemen, this company will manufacture both the plebeian and the patrician qualities, with the philanthropic purpose of benefiting both classes of society.

“And now, then, it can hardly be needful much longer to insist upon the subject. The whole world seems agreed upon it. After reading all the books in the British Museum, I did not find in one of them any objection raised to the use of treacle; on the contrary, it was extolled by many, particularly in some old numbers of the Grocers’ Journal, as being as much calculated, by its soothing action on the bones, to promote longevity as either Parr’s Life Pills or Holloway’s Ointment. One argument more, and I have done. Children—unsophisticated children—cherubs, I may say, with virgin palates, are enthusiastic upon the subject of treacle. I can prove from undoubted authority,—that of a blue-book upon juvenile education and infant and ragged schools,—that children from the tenderest years would prefer treacle—wholesome treacle—to all such noxious compounds as Gibraltar rock, almond hard-bake, vulgarly called ‘ammony-hard;’ alicumpene; Spanish liquorice, in stick or stalk; brandy-balls, acid stick, or the whole tribe of lollipops. Yes, sir, such is the purity of the youthful taste, that a boy would rather be left to himself inside a newly-emptied treacle-cask, than in the most luxurious confectioner’s shop in the metropolis. Let our

motto be then, ' Success to treacle, and may its virtues promote the virtues of society ! ' ”

Such were the facts and the arguments, continued the City gentleman, which produced the vast demand for shares, which I shall shortly describe, and established the company in the highest condition of prosperity. All rival companies, which were numerous, we squashed by the simple process of underselling them. We had three times the capital of the richest of them, and a hundred thousand times the capital of those who had no capital at all. Besides, our treacle was far superior to the best of theirs. I am in a position to say that every treacle but ours was adulterated. A committee of children were chosen to decide upon the question; and after tasting the samples of about twenty-five companies, they unanimously pronounced in favour of Buffs & Co.'s treacle, declaring that the fine rich aroma of Buffs & Co., which they tasted first, remained unimpaired upon their tongues and palates through all the twenty-four tastings of weak, inferior, and adulterated treacle which ensued. This settled the matter, and the twenty-five rival establishments were declared bankrupt.

Buffs & Co. and Percy had just looked over the prospectus, although the former gentleman had it by heart long ago, when the door opened, and the head clerk and the happy possessor of twins—Stump, in fact—rushed in, a memorandum in his hand and joy in his eyes.

“ They're going up like rockets ! ” shouted Stump.

“ They're at fifteen premium ! ”

“ I knew it, I knew it, ” said Buffs & Co., calmly but triumphantly.

“ The City is wild, ” rejoined Mr. Stump ; “ no such excitement since the blessed railway days. The gents

in the House are pulling each other's coats off, fighting for shares; the bears are sucking their paws, and the bulls are roaring for joy!"

"God bless my soul!" said Mr. Percy Wyndham, who was somewhat at a loss to understand these manifestations on the part of graminivorous and carnivorous animals; "I never heard of such a demonstration."

Bufs & Co. was meanwhile endorsing the application for shares which Percy had filled up.

"What do you think this piece of paper's worth?" inquired Bufs & Co., holding up the application.

"I positively don't know enough of algebra to determine the fraction of the farthing," answered Percy.

"Stump," cried Bufs & Co., "here!" He gave him a whispered instruction, and the progenitor of twins disappeared.

"Go to the window and tell me what you see over the way," said Bufs & Co.

The West-end man, in his state of tranquil bewilderment, passively obeyed. He saw a narrow, dirty, grimy street crowded with people, who were shoving and tearing along and disappearing into the gulf of a square dark passage, ill defended by a pair of swinging mahogany doors, glass in the upper part, through which the gazer could catch glimpses, as they were violently banged and beaten to and fro, of great brass plates, a good deal thumbed and dimmed, inscribed, "Offices of the Grand United Philanthropic City, West-end, and Clapham New Town Treacle and Molasses Importation Company."

"We've only opened to-day," said Bufs & Co., "and see the run for shares. We've come out at ten premium, and we're going up every minute. Do you intend to realise?"

“Realise what? my hopes?”

“Few hopes are realised,” murmured the engaged lady. “They flash before us like summer meteors—they disappear like churchyard vapours.”

“Still fewer shares are realised,” interposed the President.

“*Vanitas vanitatum!*” said the young clergyman meekly. “I once established an offertory, on the orthodox plan, but—*omnia vanitas!*”

“What’s an offertory?” inquired the pale or perhaps pallid-faced lady. “You’ve been talking of shares; is it any thing like a sharing company?”

“In one respect, madam,” replied the President; “very little generally comes of either.”

“But really,” said the young lady, with a pleading voice, “the story ought to go on. Mr. Percy Wyndham must all this time be suffering more poignant anguish than pen can write.”

“He was,” continued the City man, “but he was schooled to self-control; and only when Buffs & Co., taking his silence—for he was silent—for consent to realise the shares, had written out a cheque for a cool hundred”——

“A cool hundred!” interrupted the Lady of Lyons. “Dear me! I’ve known a sum of that amount, notwithstanding its coolness, burn a hole in a gentleman’s pocket.”

A cool hundred, continued the narrator severely, —and handed it to him, that Percy Wyndham’s cheek flushed and his eye kindled, and he was about to express his acknowledgments, when a voice struck his ear—a lady’s voice—a known voice—a dear voice. He stopped—he turned pale—he trembled.

"What's the matter?" cried Buffs & Co.; "the sandwiches haven't disagreed with you?"

But Percy Wyndham's faculties were absorbed in listening: and again that voice—as silver sweet as lovers' tongues—in Mincing Lane—was heard to echo from the passage.

"But, Stump!" that was what it said—it wasn't much that—"but, Stump!" But the tone—the tone was dreadful to a lover. Buffs & Co. heard it too.

"I suppose," said Buffs & Co., "I suppose it's Mary Flanagan, the laundress's daughter, making love to old Stump. She's such a girl for talking. Ha! ha! ha! a perfect Magpie and Stump!"

Mary Flanagan! that voice belong to a laundress's daughter! that tone! those sounds to proceed from plebeian lips! Faugh! Percy listened again, and as he did so he trembled in his glazed boots. He did not wait long.

"Do, my dear Mr. Stump, like an old darling as you are. I have sent in an application; I have exhausted all my eloquence in vain; my only hope is in you. Come now, consent. Do now; and I'll give—I'll—I don't know what I'll not give." Mr. Percy Wyndham stood petrified, and Buffs & Co. leaped up.

"Why," roared Buffs, "it's my niece's voice!"

"Your niece's, sir?" faltered the bewildered Percy.

The door was flung open, and Stump appeared, half dragging, half leading in a laughing, blushing, giggling young lady; she of the cab—she of the baby!

"Sophy!" exclaimed the "house," in the most vehement tones ever used by any commercial mansion since Tubal Cain attended the first quarterly meeting of iron-masters.

"Sophy!" repeated in frantic accents the unhappy

Percy; while the young lady stood motionless, in that condition which is peculiar to vegetables and heroines —“rooted to the spot.”

Stump broke the silence.

“I must tell you, sir,” he began, “a secret. Miss Sophy is a regular little stag. She made no end of money in the railway time, and—ha! ha! ha! she thought she’d do a stroke in treacle.” The old clerk stopped to laugh and chirrup.

Percy stood speechless. Sophy—the ethereal—the Byronic!—Sophy, who was in the *Book of Beauty*!—Sophy, whose peerless image was enshrined in the holiest niche within his heart! Sophy doing a stroke in treacle!

Stump resumed,—

“Meeting Mrs. Stump in Regent Street—Mrs.



Stump was out with the twins—she heard how we were getting on, and off she started for Mincing Lane in such a hurry that she actually carried off—ha! ha! ha!—one of the twins with her.”

A light flashed across the brain of Percy Wyndham.

“By the way,” said Stump, “you hav’n’t told me—where is the twin?”

“Ask that gentleman,” said Sophy.

“Bless my soul!” exclaimed the “house,” getting red in the face.

“Where is the twin?” repeated Stump, alarmed.

“Invested,” gasped Wyndham; “invested in Toddy Bopps.”

He sank into a chair, and in the tumult of his feelings, put the cheque for a cool hundred into his pocket. In an instant ——

“Stop!” exclaimed the President; “what happened in an instant it is this lady’s province to tell.” And he indicated the student of the *Lady of Lyons*.

THEATRICAL LADY'S PROMPTINGS.



IN an instant—that's my cue, is it?" asked the lady thus indicated, with perfect *sang froid*. —In an instant the door opened again, and a rather smartly dressed man of middle age, and with decidedly keen expression upon his handsome but somewhat worn-looking face, darted up to Percy

Wyndham, and said—

"A man with a hundred pounds in his pocket, and looking puzzled what to do with it! And this is the nineteenth century, which boasts of its education and enlightenment, and all that! Come with me."

And before Percy had well recovered from his ori-

ginal state of stupefaction, his acquaintance had hurried him out of the house and into the neighbouring banking-house, turned the cheque into a bundle of clean crisp five-pound notes, thrust Wyndham into a cab, jumped in after him, and ordered the driver to go up to St. John's Wood as fast as if the wood were on fire and he was the first fire-engine.

"St. John's Wood!" said Percy, as soon as he was able to begin inquiries.

"Of course, my dear boy, of course. There is but one thing that any rational man can do when he finds a hundred pounds in his pocket; and that I am going to show you how to do."

"But you might tell me what it is," remarked Percy, about to take hold of the check-string.

"I might, certainly," said the other, holding the string so that Wyndham could not pull it; "but I'd rather not. 'Trust to my name, my fortune, and my star.' My first being, as you know, Albany Footlights; my second being the sum of one hundred pounds, just paid over by the respectable Messrs. Barclay; and my third being myself. It sounds like a charade, don't it? Guess the solution."

"I give it up," said Percy. "Let me out, will you? Here, driver, stop!"

"Do but seem to stop, you deeply-dyed and most pernicious villain, and I will stab your very soul with a fare of sixpence!" cried the other. "Have you no confidence in me?" he added to Percy Wyndham.

"Not much at any time," was the frank answer, "but at this moment I have no confidence in any body. I must get back to the City. I must speak to that lady. I must ——"

"Listen to me. Miss Sophy Paget ——"

"You know her!" exclaimed Percy.

"I know every body. But I was going to tell you. By this time the lady will have gone away, and so, I need hardly point out to a man of your logical mind, you will not see her. But I can tell you where you can see her to-night."

"To-night!"

"Yes, at seven o'clock precisely—or perhaps three minutes past, as the overture may be a long one—coming from her dressing-room to stand at the second wing, P.S., of the Royal Octagon Theatre, preparatory to going on as 'Cassandra,' in the new comedietta of *Bachelors' Wives and Maids' Children*."

"Sophy Paget going on the stage! Are you bereft of your senses?" shouted Percy.

"Clearly not of the sense of hearing, at any rate," replied Mr. Footlights. "Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud. Miss Sophy Paget, or rather, to use her stage name, Miss Hermione Elderflowers, is a very charming actress, and will one day make a noise in the world."

"Sophy Paget on the stage!" muttered Percy. "What new disclosure will be made! How I have been deceived! On the stage! And yet she had the assurance to talk to me of our marrying! By Jove!"

"Marrying—ay, marry, and why not?" retorted Mr. Albany Footlights. "She is a very good girl, and would do you a deuced deal of honour in throwing away herself and her talents on you. Come!"

"I don't exactly see the matter in that light," replied Percy, quite haughtily enough; "but we will not discuss the question."

"I don't see why we shouldn't discuss it," said the other; "we have plenty of time. I repeat to you that Miss Elderflowers is a deal too good for you. Who are you, and what can you do? You have about five hundred a-year of independent property, that's all. If the Flowers work, she'll have twenty pounds a week some day, from Webster or Madame Celeste. If the bank breaks, you're a gone 'coon. But she can always earn her living. On the whole, I shall advise her, as a friend, to look higher than you."

Eminently disgusted at this address, Mr. Percy Wyndham threw himself back in the cab, and meditated sullenly.

After some time he started up, and said in a peremptory tone,—

"Footlights, where are you going?"

His companion saw that this time it would be useless to evade the question; so he replied,—

"I am going to take a theatre."

"Take a theatre!"

"Yes; Providence has thrown one hundred pounds in my way, and it would be improvidence not to lay it out in a becoming manner. There is a theatre to let up this way; the last proprietor spent the last shilling of a large fortune in gilding it, and cushioning it, and putting up cambric curtains in it, and is, of course, in prison. We will step in and avail ourselves of his obliging liberality."

Wyndham thought for a moment or two, and then said,

"Footlights, I was tossing up in my mind whether to send you back to old Buffs with the hundred pounds and a guard of honour selected from the next station-

house, or to let you have your own way, on certain conditions. The imaginary coin has come down 'woman,' and you may have your theatre—conditionally."

"Ah, you're a devilish good fellow! I always said so; and every body that ever heard me agreed with me. Now, to show my regard for you, I'll pay you back your hundred pounds the night the theatre opens."

"The deuce you will!" said Percy; "you hav'n't got a rap."

"No," said the other; "but I have got a 'nob'—a splendid dramatic 'nob'; turns out plots, characters, properties, groupings in no time; and so I'll write the opening piece: five acts—powerful effects—sure to take. Now, for this piece I would charge any manager 100*l*. I will do it for the Pollylabone for nothing, which is, of course, equivalent to repaying you that sum; so that you see that you will have nothing to do but to give me a stamped receipt—it only costs a penny—and we are square."

"No, no," cried Percy; "I'll have nothing to do with that. I never heard of one of your pieces succeeding yet. There was your burletta, *The Drummer and his Drumsticks*, damned at the Olympic; and your translation from Victor Hugo, at the Surrey, had a most successful run of from half-past six till a quarter after seven, when the curtain fell amidst the most tremendous d—condemnation that ever was heard."

"It was the acting, Percy—the horrible acting. You never saw such sticks; and, besides, the transpontine Goths no more understand Victor Hugo than they understand *Æschylus* in the original."

"I don't think *you* understand it in the original or in the translation," replied Percy, with a look which

Footlights did not like. "Is it an adaptation you propose to do for the opening piece of the Pollylabone?"

"Not at all," said the sanguine Footlights; "original, sir. Original as the prologue to—to—to—(upon my soul, I don't remember what)—to—but to—. Some stupid old English comedy which says:

‘To-night no borrowed scenes from France we show;
'Tis English—English, sirs, from top to toe.’ ”

"Have you settled on a subject?" said Percy, humouring him.

"Well, I *have* been thinking of one the other day. It's somewhat crude at present; but I believe I can soon lick it into shape. I must be alone, though—solitary with my thoughts, at the desk, you see; and then, and then it all comes, you see—understand, when I take up the pen—I'm good for nothing without the pen—can't screw out a single idea; but give me the immortal, the glorious goose-quill, and the ideas flow like water out of a pump."

"But pumps sometimes get choked," said Percy.

"Well, I admit that. When a pump goes out to dinner, now, and takes salmon, and comes home, or is taken home, at three o'clock A.M., when the air is remarkably frosty, then next day, as he lies (a wet towel round his head), he does feel intellectually a little choky; and when he sits down to write, can't for the life of him manage at all about Adrien Montacourt, who has married his sister-in-law's eldest brother's first cousin, he being, at the time, the husband of three women, who happen to be the wives of three other gentlemen, who have left their own, and taken three others. You see that the matrimonial connexion, when you get into

a complication of this sort—besides it's not being quite moral—becomes so elaborate, as to require a man like myself, or M. Alexandre Dumas—who, by the way, is indebted to me for some of his best plots—to hold the clue."

"Well," said Percy, "but you said that you had an idea, the heads of which you jotted down. Well, give us the heads, and let's hear what it is about."

"I told you it was quite crude; but I think it's effective. So here goes—a mere outline, you know, but full of dramatic effects. Well, then: Characters—Scampish lord and suffering lady; devil of a mother-in-law; wily agent, who cheats scampish lord; beautiful girl, daughter of agent, in love with a virtuous baker; father finds it out, and shoves the baker into the oven. Then comic business, to relieve the feelings of the audience. Beautiful girl pines away. Merry girl, her companion, introduces a handsome French gentleman to the house. Father objects; words run high; fight at each end of a handkerchief with pistols. Frenchman falls. Merry girl, who has been listening at the door, rushes in and raises him. He has only been knocked over by the wind of the bullet, and turns out to be the Marquis de Château Rouge, or Louis Napoleon, or something of that sort. Meantime agent troubled in his mind, and continually hearing a cry of 'Baa-ker' in his ears, thinks of confessing and being comfortably hanged. The Marquis and the merry girl are to be married, when the Marquis's three wives rush in. At the same time, the scampish lord is arrested by Levi in person, and the agent by Inspector Bucket for baking the baker; but just as the three French ladies are going to haul off the Marquis, he produces certificates that the three ladies had each

another husband, so that his own marriages with them are null and void. Wrath of the ladies, and general joy of the company, when the long-lost uncle of the scampish lord comes in from Australia—gives the scampish lord his blessing and 100,000*l.* in nuggets; while the agent is saved by the entrance of the baker, who has not been baked, the oven not having been hot enough.—Now, then, Percy Wyndham, there's a plot for you, struck off at once, and only requiring the comic business to be put in, which I'll do myself, to save expense. What do you think—that it will do—be a regular knock-em-down hit—eh?"

"Not at all—a vile piece of extravagance. Give it to your friend Alexandre Dumas: it may do for the *Fumnamble*, but not for the *Pollylabone*."

And thus were Mr. Albany Footlights' schemes for being the author of the theatre choked off. He vowed revenge, indeed; but he didn't keep his vow. He said he'd turn off the lights on the first night, after he had taken all the money, and have a spree in Belgium. Next, he was to bribe both the star of the evening to get the gout, and the principal danseuse—

"To sprain her ancle," said the logical lady, thinking thereby to draw an inevitable inference.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! how little people in front know about it. Why, if she were to pretend any thing of the kind, she would have to keep her bed for three weeks at least, and a doctor would be sent; and then, you know, there would be no use in her trying to get over the medical gentleman."

"Of course not," said the gentleman attached to the profession alluded to.

"Because, you see," continued Pauline, taking up,

like the moon, the wondrous tale, "that for the three weeks in question she wouldn't draw a farthing from the treasury. The ghost wouldn't walk for her; not it."

"May I inquire the meaning of that phrase?" said the medical gentleman.

"Oh, certainly," replied the actress. "The ghost not walking means no money in the treasury on Saturdays."

"Dear me," said the clerical gentleman, "what a number of strange phrases you theatrical ladies and gentlemen possess!"

"Not more than you ecclesiastical gentlemen possess. If we have our wings, and flies, and flats, and vampire traps, entrances, P.S. and O.P., and sets, and sky-borders, you have your naves, and aisles, and transepts, and chancels, and apses. Every profession has its own language and its own technical terms."

"To be sure," said the medico; "medicine would be nothing without hard words."

Pauline looked at him keenly, and then said:

"And I'll tell you another thing: theatres have—doctors."

"Very proper—very proper," assented the medical man. "It is gratifying to see managers paying such attention to the health of their people."

"Oh, it's nothing of that kind," replied Pauline; "he's only kept—I mean engaged—to write certificates."

"Yes, but he sees the patients—that's in any case, as a matter of course."

"Not in the least: if any body in the theatre is really ill, he or she must have their own doctor; it's only

when you're not ill—quite the contrary—that you have the 'house surgeon.' ”

“ I hardly understand,” said the monastic gentleman.

“ Look,” said Pauline. “ Suppose Mowbray de Vere and Charley Lee to invite me and Amy Vernon to a dinner at the Star and Garter, or the Crown and Sceptre. Now Amy is at the Octagon ; it wouldn't do, you know, to have two certificates in one theatre in one evening ; but she sends a certificate of illness from a real doctor to her theatre. She's a favourite there, and so some one else is put in her place and no more said. But my manager is not so easily managed ; and so Mowbray de Vere goes to him (M. Demmey is his name—it's like swearing, isn't it ? but it isn't), and says, ‘ Demmey, I have invited Miss ——’—(a pause)—‘ Miss Blank, and Charley Lee has asked Amy Vernon, to go down this evening to the Star and Garter. Now if you will just join our party—with you know who—it would make the thing complete.’

“ Of course Demmey—it *does* sound very like swearing—makes a sort of hum-and-ha sort of business about me. ‘ You know, my dear sir—she draws so much—and—and really—’

“ Upon which, of course, Mowbray says, ‘ Now, Demmey, old fellow, you know what's good for you with our fellows, and what's not : send a certificate to old Gumby to sign, and we'll all be merry as grigs.’

So just as the stage-manager, in an evening dress, and with a long face, is reading a document somewhat like this :

“ I regret to be obliged to certify that Miss ——”

—a look round and a ‘h’m’—“is suffering under an attack of bronchitis, which totally disables her from appearing this evening before you. I trust, however, that she will be so far recovered as to be able to claim the kind indulgence of the audience to-morrow night.

“DIONYSIUS GUMBY, M.D.”

“So, as I said,” continued Pauline Deschappelles, “so just as the stage-manager is doing this, Mowbray is shouting for the champagne which was put in ice at three, and Charley Lee is confidentially advising Amy Vernon to take a green glass of Hockheimer instead; while the manager and ‘you know who’ are considerably flustered already.”

“Really, ladies and gentlemen, I must interfere,” said the President; “I must positively interdict these episodes, or our story will come to be something like *Tristram Shandy*, or the beginning of the *Tale of a Tub*, where there is a digression in praise of digression.”

Mademoiselle Pauline Deschappelles bent her head in token of reproof, and continued:

“Well then, to get over this part of my story quickly, the theatre was taken, and in a week broad acres of placards announced that on the following Monday the Royal Pollylabone Theatre would open under a new management and with the most talented company in the metropolis; and the first name, in unsociable capital letters, on the list of ladies, was that of

MISS HERMIONE ELDERFLOWERS,

(Late of the Octagon Theatre.)

The theatre opened, and prospered. Mr. Manager Footlights puffed and pleaded his boldest about encouragement to native talent, and played nothing but

French translations and Italian operas, thereby saving nearly all payments to authors. The press was properly "seen to." In France it would have been bribed; but as the English critics are at all events incorruptible, it only remained to the manager to practise upon them what is termed "social bribery," that is, to make their personal acquaintance, profess the utmost willingness to be guided by their suggestions, to throw open his green-room to them, while peers and guardsmen were excluded, and to place at their disposal the most luxurious private boxes. And an occasional dinner-party, kept very quiet, but the feast given in the best possible style, to the *élite* of the press and a few members of both Houses of Parliament, was an outlay amply repaid by the good-nature of the literary guests; for how *can* a gentleman cut up a manager's pheasants on Thursday, and his farces on Friday? Then, too, the best of the critics were dramatic authors also, and in their favour Mr. Manager Footlights departed from his economical system, and paid the price of an original tragedy for a translation of a one-act vaudeville; and what critic could fail to praise a theatre where his literary merit was so liberally appreciated?

"It appears to me," said the merry-faced gentleman, "that in the pleasant arrangements you have so pleasantly described, one party is a good deal lost sight of—I mean, the public."

"Very likely," replied the lady, laughing. "But who *is* the public, that writers should say ill-natured things, ruin a spirited manager, and spoil their own private market, for *him*? 'The Public,' as an author said to me at rehearsal one morning, 'is composed of my butcher, my baker, and my candlestick-maker; behind

whom sit your butcher, your baker, and your candlestick-maker. Worthy people ; but I am not going to hurt my friend Whitewash's management, your reputation as an actress, or my own fame as a dramatist, that those six tradesmen may be enlightened on the true principles of theatrical art.' But to go on with my story." The theatre prospered. It happened to be a good vaudeville season at Paris, and Footlights grew so liberal, that he actually offered to bring out an English writer's comedy for nothing, if the latter would pay only a hundred pounds for the expenses of the stage, and give a receipt for another hundred, to be shown about town. But as yet the Paget,—Elderflowers I mean,—had not come out at the Pollylabone. Percy Wyndham had solemnly agreed with Footlights that the connexion of the former with the theatre was to be kept secret from every body ; and so, though a partner in the management, Wyndham did not avail himself of the usual privileges the gentleman-partners in such matters claim ; namely, meddling in every thing, from the gauzes of the ballet-girls to the carpenter's glue-pot, flirting unlimitedly with all the ladies of the company, and spoiling the tempers of the actresses and the effect of the pieces by selecting as a pet some pretty little stupidity, and humouring her servant-maidish desire to be more finely dressed than any body else upon the stage. Perhaps a scheme he had in his head kept him from such amiable levities.

To the exceeding astonishment of the whole company, they read at the bottom of the bills one morning, that Shakspeare's tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* was about to be produced on a scale of great magnificence ; Romeo by a gentleman of provincial celebrity, and Juliet by the highly-gifted Miss Hermione Elderflowers, her first ap-

pearance on these boards. Every body stared. Doing such good business, and going to change the bill! Altering the line of pieces which had given so much satisfaction, and playing Shakspeare, who always revenges himself upon his murderers by speedily shutting up the theatre of their crime! Footlights was mad, said every lady and gentleman of his company, when the manager's back was turned; and every one of them privately shook him by the hand, and said it wasn't for them to give an opinion, but their wish was father to their thought, and they must say that he was taking a noble course; for, after all, say what people would,—and they were aware that people said a good many things,—Shakspeare was a man, take him for all in all, the like of whom we shall not look upon again; and they had always said, that if there was a theatre where due honour *could* be paid to the sweet Swan of Avon, Mr. Footlights' theatre was that place; and for their poor parts, they should only be too happy to give their humble assistance in any way. To which Mr. Footlights replied, to every one of them, that he *had* been in some little doubt, but now he had heard that performer's opinion in his favour, he was satisfied he was doing right; and as soon as he got into the passage, he kicked out his leg behind, and winked to himself.

The tragedy was cast, and included the whole debility of the company; and the gentleman who played Paris of course made the regulation joke, that he supposed it was a French part, and must be spoken with the foreign accent. The low-comedy man who played Peter, being determined on raising a laugh, proposed to support the legitimate drama by wearing a very long false nose, very red, to be knocked off by the Nurse's fan;

and he sulked for two days, and talked of conventional prejudices, because his nose was interdicted by Footlights. This gentleman undertook Mercutio; and if he did not play it as exquisitely as Mr. Charles Kemble—which no one ever did, or ever will—he was jaunty and pleasant enough. Miss Elderflowers duly rehearsed her Juliet, but it was with a substituted Romeo, for the real one came to no rehearsals; and Footlights would only say that the coming man would be forthcoming and perfect at the appointed time. Each of the walking gentlemen of the company privately prayed that the Romeo might have broken his neck, as in that case certain merits, which all the London managers were in a conspiracy to put down, might have a chance. Of course, you have all guessed who the Romeo was to be; but the company could have no idea of it, and Miss Elderflowers as little as any body; while as for Miss Sophy Paget, she had never, since the scene in the city, so cleverly described by this gentleman (the City narrator bowed), been able to hear a word of her former admirer.

What Footlights had said of her was true; she was a very good actress, and needed only study and practice to become a great one. I am bound to say that she was not one of those geniuses who believe that the most picturesque and artificial art in the world is to be at once mastered by a person who has been too idle or too stupid to succeed in a profession or trade; and she was not, like a good many others, too proud to learn; and would go and watch the tragedy of Rachel, or Viardot, or Ellen Kean, and, without seeking to imitate their "effects," would strive to understand the principles on which they were produced. And I say this

fairly, although in one case injustice was done me on her account; for, great as her talent was, I was admitted to be superior in burlesque to any actress upon the boards (except Mrs. Keeley, whom I admit to be inimitable), and yet Miss Elderflowers was put into Morgiana in the *Forty Thieves*, though I was in the country theatre where it was brought out. The circumstance excited universal astonishment throughout London and the provinces, and I believe the whole European press was in arms about the unfairness; indeed I did hear that the government availed itself of the excitement occasioned by it to smuggle several acts of parliament through the Houses, as nobody paid any attention to any topic but my ill-treatment. So, you see, I can speak fairly even of a rival.

The night fixed for the production of *Romeo and Juliet* came on. Puff's preliminary had been got into the Sunday papers, and there was a capital "let" of boxes; but the manager had, of course, too much good sense to rely on chance, and therefore had put on the bills, in large letters, that "the free-list was entirely suspended," and had given away twice as many orders as the house would hold. The last rehearsal had gone off well, though the Romeo was still missing, and each of the walking gentlemen had sedulously understudied the part, to be ready should his prayers be answered. The low-comedy man having about twenty lines to say, and having had a fortnight to learn them, had actually rough-studied them, and could on the morning of performance say something very like the author's meaning. At least half the properties—you know that means the furniture of the stage—were ready, and the property-man promised that they should be all ready at night,

and kept his word,—as property-men always do. The doors were duly opened at half-past six, and as all the orders were obliged to be in before seven, the house was crowded to suffocation before the orchestra came in. Still nothing had been seen of the Romeo, and the walking gentlemen kept near Mr. Footlights, and smiled obsequiously, and looked unutterable devotion to the cause of the theatre.

The overture was played; and though every performer went wrong a dozen times, the friends of the management applauded tremendously, and declared loudly that Signor Scrambeloni made his orchestra go as one instrument. And then the curtain rose, and the thumb was bitten and the fight began; Gregory was told to remember his swashing blow, and then ——

“And then *what*, reverend sir?” said the President, turning to the clerical gentleman in the Puseyite costume.

The lady waved her hand to the interruptor, and laughed merrily.

“Yes, that’s what I do so want to know, you can’t think!” she said, sitting back for what she called “a good listen.”

THE
CLERICAL GENTLEMAN'S DISCOURSE.



THE clerical gentleman appeared to be prepared for the summons. His preaching experience possibly stood him in good stead; and so, crossing his fingers on his knees, and looking meekly up to the light in the carriage-roof, with a soft and mellifluous voice, he “intoned” as follows:

“And then—
he repeated—and
then the Romeo

of the evening did not make his appearance at all. My dear hearers may well conceive the scene of confusion and the appalling outburst of bad and evil tempers which ensued. The *vox populi* broke out into the most clamorous reprobation of the missing performer, of the

management, and of the theatre ; and I am grieved to say that many unprincipled persons (supposed to be Dis-senters) who had entered by means of orders, demanded that their money should be refunded ; the end of the affair being that the curtain was allowed to descend after a futile attempt on the part of Mr. Footlights—whose profession probably deadened him to the finer feelings of our moral nature—to induce the audience to believe that Romeo had been seized by a sudden and severe attack of bronchitis, of which alleged fact he produced a certificate purporting to be signed by an eminent member of the faculty of medicine. The audience, therefore, tore up the benches, broke the lustres and chandeliers, and quite ruined the theatre by the amount of money which they received at the doors. So strong a proof of our common frailty I cannot easily pass over. It was demonstrated by means of figures, that thirteen people had paid sixpence each for the gallery, and one had paid one and sixpence for the pit, whereas there was refunded 27*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* ; a pecuniary loss which quite, if I may use the expression, blasted the fortunes of the establishment.

But where was Mr. Percy Wyndham ? for he it was who was the missing one. As soon as the tumult—as Lord Byron expresses it in an impious poem, which I have never read, called a *Vision of Judgment*,—as soon as the tumult had dwindled to a calm, Mr. Albany Footlights proceeded in hot haste to his friend's chambers, breathing out threatenings and slaughters against the defaulter. He rushed upstairs, arrested for a moment only by a young woman of solemn aspect, and in a garb of mediæval and ecclesiastical cast, who said meekly,

“ Remember, 'tis the Vigil of the Feast of St. Buffer and St. Blazes.”

The import of these words was not understood by the worldly and latitudinarian person addressed; and only pausing to express a wanton and impossible hope that Buffer might go to Blazes, he burst into the apartment of Mr. Percy Wyndham, and, with an exclamation of astonishment at once energetic and profane, recoiled, and stood gazing on the threshold. Well he might. The room, which had formerly abounded in many worldly vanities—portraits, for instance, of young females who performed as public dancers—had been, by the art of a scene-painter of the theatre, converted into the similitude of a cave. It seemed as though you stood in the hollowed-out cranny of a rock. Two long tapers burned before a shrine at the further end; and the only furniture was a stool, with spikes sticking out of it for the mortification of the flesh, a skull, and a scourge, which last Mr. Percy Wyndham was in the act of applying to his bare back, the other portions of his person being clad in the humble vestments of a palmer.

“And the tapers,” said the merry-faced man, “were, I suppose, Palmer’s candles?”

But the Puseyite gentleman did not notice this unseemly interruption.

“Wyndham,” cried the worldly and profane manager, “Wyndham, are you mad?—what means this strange display?”

The person addressed pulled from his bosom a calendar beautifully illuminated, and mutely pointed to an entry in its emblazoned pages:

*De 6th of Julye. De Faste and Tyggel of yr Saintis
Blazes and Buffer.*

“Will you,” continued Wyndham, solemnly, “will

you do an alms unto a penitent palmer, and apply this scourge unto his back?"

The cruel manager liked nothing better, although little he knew of the spirit of penance, or of mortification of the flesh. He therefore, catching Wyndham by the arm, laid into him, as the Vulgate,—I mean the vulgar, have it; so that Mr. Wyndham, not being as yet sufficiently patient under penitential discipline, called out in his old and worldly fashion, "Hillo! I say, old fellow, you're coming it too strong!" and wresting the scourge from Mr. Albany Footlights' hand, he put it very expeditiously into his pocket. Then in a few words he laid before his friend the change which had come over his views, and expounded the reason why, with his present opinions, it was impossible he could have played Romeo. Had it, indeed, he suggested, been a Miracle Play, or Mystery, or Morality, he might have ventured; but it was not for a palmer—for he had determined (like that fair youth Tancred in the late Chancellor of the Exchequer's novel,) to go forth to the Holy Land—to play Romeo. And thus it was that this great and wondrous reformation came about. Going down to the Parthenon Theatre, Mr. Percy Wyndham availed himself of an omnibus. In the interior of the vehicle was a student of the Roaratory, dressed in the beautiful and graceful ecclesiastical style adopted by those reverend personages, and so excessively and orthodoxly thin, that the conductor, an impious man, said that he must be in training to go down a gas-pipe. This reverend ecclesiastic distributed small tracts and legends of the saints to the passengers, in the manner of the agents of the Semitic tailor who has produced what I understand to be a curious architectural work, called *Costume Castle*; and one of these "fly-leaves," as I

would call them, if certain low Methodist persons had not adopted, and, by so doing, soiled the name—fell into the hands of Percy Wyndham. It was the Legend of St. Buffer.

“Why was the Buffer called a saint?” irreverently interrupted the gentleman with the small moustache.

The legend itself, which I purpose to recite,—resumed the narrator,—will specify. I modernise the pronouncement. In the days of Ethelbert the Saxon lived a man pious and of good repute; so much so, indeed, that all the diocese agreed that he was a good old Buffer. Once, about the time of Matins, he walked forth upon the turnpike-road to meditate.

“Turnpike-roads during the Heptarchy?” interrupted the lady who studied Whately; “stuff and nonsense!”

“Miraculous turnpikes,” replied the clergyman meekly; “miraculous.” And then resuming the story: When he perceived stretching its dreadful head—

“*Monstrum horrendum informe ingens,*”

over a neighbouring hedge, a fiery dragon. “I know,” interpolated the narrator, “that William of Malmsbury states it was not a dragon, but a griffin; and his authority has been followed by Mr. M‘Cabe in his recent Catholic *History of England*; but from my own researches, I incline to think it could not well have been any thing but a dragon, and I have written a Latin thesis on the subject, which——”

“Which,” said the President, “I trust you have not in your pocket.” Slightly abashed, the young gentleman withdrew his hand from a receptacle in his single-breasted coat, and continued:

“Buffer,” said the Dragon, “I intend to eat you, my



Buffer, and to use your umbrella afterwards in the light of a tooth-pick."

"Monster!" rejoined the dauntless Buffer; "monster! come out from within that field, where thou art trampling on the corn of my neighbour, or verily I will lay hands on thee, and convey thee unto the pound, wherein thou shalt be impounded."

At this dreadful menace, the dragon jumped over the hedge with such a fearful roar, that it was heard by three people who were stone-deaf, and it made one huge bite at the Buffer with its ponderous jaws; but recollecting, at the very instant that the victim writhed within its teeth, that it was by nature graminivorous and not carnivorous, the creature, obedient to that instinct of its nature which dragons and dragoons, light and heavy, implicitly obey, dropped the Buffer, and putting its tail between its legs, vanished with a "melodious twang," and was never seen or heard of afterwards. St. Buffer was of course immediately canonised.

This,—continued the reverend young gentleman,—was the precious legend which recalled Percy Wyndham to a sense of the vanities of this life, and at once induced him to embrace what is called the Tractarian philosophy; the blessed influence of which has indeed produced such results, that many ladies and gentlemen have given in their adhesion on even weaker ground than the admirable and authentic legend which I have cited, and which solemnly, and with many tears, Percy Wyndham recounted to his friend. "I mean to go immediately on pilgrimage: there is my staff," pointing to a stick with a Punch's head; "there is my scrip," pointing to a carpet-bag; "and I have sent to Billingsgate-market for a cockle-shell."

“ Oh, Lord, here’s a change !” groaned Footlights.

“ I would not,” rejoined Percy, “ perhaps have taken this step were it not for the cruel persecution of the Bishop of London. I had communicated this legend to the curates of St. Buffer’s, the Rev. Theodosius Scapulary and the Rev. Macriminius Apse, and had proposed to them to indite the Legend of St. Buffer in the form of a Mystery or Morality, and play it in the church of St. Buffer for the edification of the faithful. We communicated our plan to the Hon. and Rev. Ambrosius Mount Surplice, the incumbent, and he highly approved of it ; only, with his usual discrimination, he observed, that the legend as it stood would hardly afford sufficient matter for an imitation of the old mysteries, and suggested that some additional personages should be introduced, and blank verse used. He himself would represent Ethelbert the Saxon, and Ambrosina his own daughter might be introduced as Ethelbert’s child ; with a thane, and a jarl or earl, to give some flavour of the secularity of the times, and a hermit to indicate the depth of the religious feeling. Now,” continued Percy, “ all these suggestions were really very good.”

“ Humph !” said Footlights, “ what was to be the cast ?”

“ The incumbent,” as I told you, “ Ethelbert ; his eldest daughter Ambrosina, the Princess Ethellela, daughter of Ethelbert ; Maude, her maid, the hon. and rev. gentleman’s second daughter Cecilia ; the thane and the jarl, the two curates ; the hermit, the Hon. and Rev. Frederick St. Augustin ; St. Buffer, the Dean of Puseyside ; and the Dragon, your humble servant. There was also to be a choir of angels by the young ladies of the church-quire ; and the three deaf men were

to be the sexton, the clerk, and the incumbent's butler."

"Well," said Albany Footlights, "did the Mystery come off well, or did it come off at all? it would indeed be a mystery with a vengeance to any sensible person, if the bishop had permitted such tomfoolery."

"There is no occasion for the use of harsh expressions, nor for the statement of facts not consistent with the truth. It was indeed owing to the intolerable intolerance and overbearing arrogance of an episcopal dignitary, who was informed by a low person, a member of the low-church party, of our preparations; on which the right rev. prelate summoned the Hon. and Rev. Ambrosius Mount Surplice before him, and informed him in emphatic terms, that he would not permit a church in his diocese to be turned into a play-house. It was in vain that the excellent incumbent urged that Mysteries and Moralities were represented in sacred edifices in times gone by, and that play-houses never represented such things in the present cycle of the world's progress. The bishop was inexorable; and finally told the hon. and rev. gentleman, that if he wished to represent the absurd legend which had been submitted to him, he had better do it in his own drawing-room, amid his own private friends and those members of the church who approved of its office-bearers making merry-andrews of themselves. Now," continued Percy, "I put it to you, was not that too severe?" I am sorry to say that the reply was, "Not a bit. The bishop was perfectly right. The next thing that would be played in St. Buffers would be an ecclesiastical pantomime." What could Percy Wyndham, in his converted state, say to this, but that Albany Footlights was very far from having arrived at

that state of intellectual adorativeness which the *crème de la crème* of religious society so much admired and so extensively practised. And then Percy took a small crucifix from his embroidered shirt-bosom, and turning up his eyes in devotional rapture, kissed it; upon which the brutal—for I must use the term—Footlights said he had seen the day when Percy would rather kiss a pretty girl than a piece of ebony and ivory.

“But these days,” said Percy, with a long-drawn aspiration amounting to a sigh, “are past.”

Mr. Albany Footlights made another effort: “You’ll ruin the Pollylabone if you go on this way with cockle-shells and such dam——”

“Oh! oh! oh!” cried every body at once, except the logical lady, who did not seem to mind it in the least. “So pious a clergyman, and belonging to so strict a sect, to utter an oath!”

“My dear friends and brethren——”

“Don’t leave out the sisters,” said Pauline.

“They are included,” replied the clerical gentleman; “and you will permit me to say, that the expression in question is used in a great number of very orthodox works,—I admit, not in the sense in which not I, but Mr. Albany Footlights used it through me, I assenting, in order to give the speech of the manager a greater degree of *couleur locale*.”

“A very good explanation,” said the President.

“Jesuitical!” responded the logical lady.

The high churchite continued: “If you go on in such a way with cockle-shells and such—improper expression—nonsense, what will become of the Pollylabone?”

“It must go the way of all flesh,” said Percy; ‘come to a smash, and have Levi’s men in the house.’”

"But," remonstrated Mr. Albany Footlights, "is that the way you leave me? Your hundred pounds are gone!"

"I am sorry for it," said Percy; "but flesh is grass, and five-pound notes the rags that made them. What is man?"

"Why don't you be a man yourself, and go to Buffs, and screw another hundred out of him? If you won't for your own sake, do for mine," said Footlights: "consider my position, consider my responsibilities."

"If I take your advice, Mr. Footlights, and go to Buffs, and screw out an additional hundred, I shall assuredly keep it to myself; for what saith Saint Iago? 'Put money in thy purse.' And besides, you know, a holy palmer can't go out to the Holy Land with staff, and scrip, and cockle-shells, and possibly peas in his shoes—"

"Boiled or unboiled?" sneered Footlights.

"That is a question for consideration," replied Percy, "for when St. Buffer went to Palestine with split peas in his shoes, an angel appeared to him, and boiled them in a patent Etna."

Sorry I am, my dear hearers, to say, that the flip-pant and unthinking manager rejoined by calling this noble convert "an old pump;" an assertion which I fearlessly pronounce to be both morally and hydraulically untrue. Percy, with that martyr spirit which burns so vehemently in the veins of young and peerless England, rejoined, "Come with me to St. Buffer's Church." At the same time he flung on his palmer's garb, and above it donned a garment which I am told is by many called a "Down-the-roader," with large pearl buttons, and representations of horses and chariots thereon. A few

streets, and they arrived at the humble church of St. Buffer. The bells had just finished the vesper-peal. They rung regularly six-and-fifty times in the twenty-four hours, to the great solace of poor earnest souls around. The first service took place at a quarter to three A.M., and the last at a quarter-past two A.M. The incumbent was the Hon. and Rev. Ambrosius Mount Surplice, whose splendid presence of mind is illustrated in an anecdote profoundly interesting in the history of the church. Of course, the hon. and rev. incumbent wished to have lighted tapers continually burning.

“Yes,” said the strong-minded woman, “I believe that Puseyism is got up by the wax-chandlers.”

The meek divine passed the taunt by unheeded. But,—he continued,—the hon. and rev. gentleman was not rich, and so he had white porcelain candles made, and lit with gas, to resemble tapers. One day, about the time of Lauds, he was informed that the bishop was just coming to inquire into the state of things in the church, being incited thereto by a set of low churchmen—low in every respect—of the neighbourhood. In his momentary confusion, the hon. and rev. gentleman extinguished the tapers—burners, I would say, with his breath, and in a moment after the bishop, entering, gave an episcopal sniff, and said: “Whether or no there be a taint of Puseyism in this church, at all events there’s a horrid smell of gas,” and straightway returned to his carriage.

The friends entered the church, and found it lighted up as for a ceremonial. As they walked up the aisle, two shrouded figures approached from either side, and the Hon. and Rev. Ambrosius emerged in full canonicals from the sacristy, vulgarly called the vestry. The

shrouded figures were male and female ; the latter bore an infant. They all approached the font.

"Are you respectively the father and the mother of this child?" asked the Hon. and Rev. Ambrosius. Both the personages addressed bowed. Wyndham was seized with an irresistible impulse. He was no longer master of himself. He rushed up to the group—he tore the black lace veil from the woman's face—he snatched away the slouched wide-awake which, most unbeseemingly, was worn by the man—he tore from the baby's face the handkerchief which overspread it.

The man was Toddy Bopps, the woman was Sophia Paget, the child was the invested twin!

"'Tis false!" exclaimed Percy; and then forgetting for a moment the nature of the impending ceremony, he shouted,—

"I forbid the banns!"

"Banns," said the Hon. and Rev. Ambrosius, "belong to the ceremony of marriage, not to the sacrament of baptism."

"It's all one, according to my principles," returned Mr. Wyndham.

"Your principles," said the clergyman, "what are they?"

"Upon my friend here," said the President, indicating the gentleman with the small moustache, "devolves the explanation. Be kind enough to give it."

TRAVELLED GENTLEMAN'S TESTIMONY.



IS not every body,—said the gentleman with the greyish moustache and frock-coat, who might have been a military man, only he wasn't,—it is not every body who is ready on the instant to give a plain answer to a plain question. I do not make this remark in reference to myself, but to Mr. Percy Wyndham, who, upon the Reve-

rend Ambrosius What's-his-name naturally making the demand, “Why he muddled up the two distinct ceremonies of baptism and marriage, and interrupted them both?” sat down upon a pile of dusty hassocks, and buried his face in his hands; thus adding a hint at a third ritual of a graver character still.

Mr. Wyndham's meditations may not have aided him much. But they might have done so, could he have rolled back his mind's eye chronologically for a few years, and topographically to the City of the Sultan, better known as Constantinople.

I was there at the time to which I refer. My own business there was partly diplomatic, partly epicurean. I went to eat *kabaubs*, and to keep my eye on the manoeuvres of certain European powers who were suspected of intending to do a great many things, which, as they didn't do them, it is fair to conclude were prevented by my vigilance. Any how, I ate the *kabaubs*.

"Are the Turks pleasant people to live with?" demanded the President.

"Excellent fellows, if you have nothing to do, and can afford to sit and smoke, and gossip. They have no idea of an article to which in England we attach some value, I mean—time; and, at first, the extreme slowness with which they get through business of any kind drives an Englishman wild, and makes an American swear hideously. A French dentist in Constantinople gave me an illustration of this, in a contrast between a Turk and a Saxon, who had both had recourse to him for the same purpose. A Turkish gentleman came to my acquaintance (his name is Descamps, and he does his work very well), and, of course, pipes and coffee were ordered."

"Smell of tobacco in a consulting room! Precious unprofessional," said the medical gentleman.

"Turkish tobacco leaves a different scent from Houndsditch cabbage," said the other; "besides, there are no ladies to be shocked. Well, after some general conversation, the Turk introduced an anecdote of a

friend of his own, who once had been troubled with an incessant aching in one of his teeth, which proved to be decayed. M. Descamps listened with an affectation of unconcern, knowing perfectly well what the discourse would ultimately come to, made some careless answer, and told some other anecdote. After an hour's pleasant chat, the Turkish gentleman went away, with the usual graceful courtesy of the people, who certainly are the best-bred men in the world."

"But nothing was done—and no fee paid?" asked the doctor.

"Nothing having been done, why should a fee be paid?" said the other, drily. "The next day the same visitor came, pipes and coffee were ordered, and some agreeable gossip was exchanged."

"What do they talk about in Turkey?" asked the theatrical lady; "strangling, I suppose, and the Koran, and the Houris."

"The staple of a Turk's gossip," said the other, "are stories showing the exceeding wickedness and treachery of woman. Nine out of ten of their best tales have a lady's indiscretions as their basis; but these are not the stories that get into print."

"And yet you call these people well-bred!" said the young lady with the engaged ring. "Horrid wretches!"

"I dare say you are quite right," said the narrator; "but I have no doubt that this proved the substance of the dentist's talk with his patient. In the course of the conversation the Turk alluded, as M. Descamps knew he would do, to the story he had told on the preceding day, and he asked: 'Now, Descamps Effendi, suppose it had been the will of Allah that you had known the man who suffered in the way I described, what course

would your wisdom have devised?" "I should have pulled the tooth out," said the dentist, as carelessly as if he did not know that the tooth was at that moment beside the tongue that was talking to him. There was more talk, and another parting.

"Still no fee?" said the doctor.

"None earned," persisted the other, smiling. "On the third day, the same preliminaries of smoke and talk being over, the Turk recapitulated the two days inquiries, and asked, 'Suppose, Descamps Effendi, the suffering man had been permitted by Allah to place his jaw in your hands, what sum should you have charged him?' 'Forty piastres,' said the dentist; and they separated. The fourth day the Turk confessed that he was the person alluded to, and had the tooth looked at. The fifth he had it out. The sixth he paid part of the money; and in the course of the following week he honourably paid every para, for he had not the least idea of defrauding or bargaining; but the Turks take things easily. About eight visits, of an hour each, saw the tooth out and the dentist paid."

"The contrast?" demanded the logical lady, who liked a statement to be complete.

"The contrast was my own case," said the traveller. "I went in: 'M. Descamps, the third tooth from the back, left lower side, is carious and painful; please to extract it.' The tooth was removed. 'Your fee is?' 'Forty piastres.' 'It is there.' 'I am much obliged—good morning.'"

"It is an interesting narrative," said the young clergyman, quietly; "but I do not know that it exactly bears upon the fortunes of the young gentleman whom I deposited in your hands."

“You are quite right, sir,” said the traveller, laughing good-humouredly; “and in return for your obliging hint, I will tell you a story of a Turkish preacher—it is very short. May I do so?”

“Certainly, pray do,” said the clergyman.

“This preacher,” said the traveller, “was, I am bound to say, a very lazy ecclesiastic. He was very fond of smoking, and other creature comforts; but if he could find any excuse for avoiding his sermon, he would. One day his congregation gathered, for it was during the week of an especial festival, and a discourse in connexion with it was almost *de rigueur*. But it was also a very hot day, and there were some exceedingly pleasant fellows in a neighbouring coffee-house. Our friend determined to escape the exertion of preaching. He rose, and very gravely demanded of his audience whether they knew what he was going to say to them? And the audience, being good observers of festivals, and taking for granted that a festival sermon was coming, replied ‘*Evet*—Yes.’ ‘In that case,’ said their pastor, ‘there is no need that I should tell you;’ and he departed to the coffee-house. But next day the same scene occurred, only the congregation, having no mind to lose the sermon,—for the lazy fellow could preach like Dr. Croly or Robert Montgomery, if he chose” (the young Puseyite’s smile did not intimate that he was much edified by the comparison), “replied to his demand, ‘*Yoke*—No.’ ‘Then,’ said he, ‘considering what festival it is, I should be ashamed to preach to such ignorant and irreligious beasts;’ and again he departed for his friends in the coffee-house. But this double story got wind; and the third day there was a very large congregation assembled, and some of them had prepared themselves with a reply which they

conceived must inevitably fix their teacher to the post of his duty. So, when he rose in his place, and as before gravely demanded whether they knew what he was going to say to them, the reply was, 'Some of us do, and some do not.' 'In that case, my beloved brethren, those who do may tell those who don't.' And once more our friend retired in triumph."

"I have heard a French version of that story," said the President; "but it is a good one, let it come whence it will; and so I dare say is Mr. Wyndham's."

"I hope so," said the travelled gentleman. "I was going to inform you that one day I had breakfasted at Misseri's hotel,—the situation is gloomy, but the attention admirable,—and I strolled into his large saloon of reception; and while I smoked a chibouk, I walked backwards and forwards between the four ballet-girls painted on the floor at the corners of the room, and wondered what I should do that day. I had amused myself with every thing in the room, looked over all the books of prints, drew all the Turkish daggers, snapped all the Albanian pistols, pulled all the oars out of the model *caiques*, and wondered whether any body would ever be found donkey enough to pay the prices asked for these 'foreign curiosities.' Then I read the list of prices, and considered that a shilling for a jug of hot water was too much, but that the other charges were fair enough. Then I talked to two or three other persons who were staying in the house: to an American, who was so afraid he should be considered uncultivated or a backwoodsman, that he always wore black pantaloons tightly strapped over patent-leather boots at breakfast-time; to an Englishman, who came in the day before with a story that he had seen a Bey

riding away to strangle a man, an attendant behind having the "bowstring" in a green bag,—the article in question being really the Bey's pipe; and to a lady, who was travelling for the sake of making a book, and wrote down any nonsense mischievous people, knowing her object, would give her as facts. I have since read her book, and a very nice book it is; and moreover contains a whole chapter descriptive of the murder of two Greeks, every word of which I invented for her benefit as we were going to the Sweet Waters; but that's the public's affair, not hers or her bookseller's.

"Oh, tell us that," said the theatrical lady, "and then go on with the regular story."

"Oh, but it was the merest nonsense," said the other, "thrown together to amuse my literary friend, who has made it quite sentimental. But as it is not very long as I put it, I have no objection to give it you. Besides, it is strictly regular to introduce an episode—that is, if nobody has any objection."

Nobody seemed to have any, so the travelled gentleman proceeded with

THE WHITE ANTELOPE.

"The roses are bright in the gardens of Astrabad," sung the enamoured young Turk, Suleiman—

"The fact might be so," said the President, "but how did *he* know? Astrabad's in Persia."

"Just so," said the other; "but I am bound to tell you, that if the lady to whom I told the tale had listened in that captious spirit, we should never have got to the end. She had the good manners to suppose that Suleiman had read of Astrabad in a book, or that Astrabad

was a suburb of Constantinople, or, in fact, not to trouble her head on the point."

"I am schooled," said the President, laughing.

"The roses are bright in the gardens aforesaid," sung the enamoured young Turk, "but brighter and sweeter is she who bloometh in the chambers of Upsilon Kappa, the Greek, even his dulcet daughter, the dark-eyed Zamira."

He sang, nor was his voice lost in the summer air, nor scattered to the breezes of the Bosphorus on whose banks he stood, until it had penetrated at the gaily-coloured window of the chamber wherein reclined the dulcet Zamira, playing with a milk-white antelope from the forests of Kanfar.

And the maiden put down her antelope, and peeped from one of the diamond panes of the window which had been broken, and, all unseen of Suleiman, she beheld that comely youth, richly arrayed, as he stood warbling below her casement.

And she said, "My heart is his."

And she gazed and listened as he sang, drinking in his beauty with her eyes, and his minstrelsy with her ears. But her father was a wily man. And the little antelope from Kanfar, resenting that it had been placed upon the ground, wandered about the house whinnying, and came to the room where the old Greek, Kappa, was making up parcels of gold and silver lace, and cheating in the accounts he wrote thereof. And it struck the ancient defrauder that something was wrong, for his daughter and the antelope were inseparable.

Wherefore he pulled off his shoes, and stealthily crept up to the chamber of Zamira; and the maiden was still

gazing through the broken pane, and still arose the young Turk's song in disparagement of the roses of Astrabad.

And Zamira saw not her father, who straightway descended again to his own chamber, and searching in a coffer, he pulled forth a huge silver-mounted pistol, which he loaded carefully; and creeping to a slit in the stone-work of his house, he brought the muzzle to bear upon the young Turk, who still warbled against the poor roses.

"I will stop the infidel's chanting," said the old Greek, putting his finger on the trigger. The Houris looked out for Suleiman, waved their green handkerchiefs, and decided from which of the celestial bins the wine-jar, sealed with musk, should be brought for him; and another moment, and he had knocked at the Prophet's gate. But as the hand of the crouching Upsilon was pressing the trigger, which was somewhat stiff with disuse, the white antelope whinnied, and sprang upon his back. The pistol was fired; but the aim was changed, and the turban of Suleiman rolled on the ground instead of his body. A shriek from Zamira woke the echoes of the Bosphorus.

"*Wallah Billah!*" said Suleiman, "but it was a near thing." And he picked up his turban and departed without saying any thing more about the roses of Astrabad; for there was vengeance in the soul of the young man, as was natural,—for who likes to have his turban shot off?

So he went to various coffee-houses where he was well known, and where he found many friends, young men like himself, of ardent passions and reckless dispositions, and he set the matter before them as they

smoked together, and they said, "Our hearts are yours in this matter, and also our hands."

And when the sky arrayed herself in stars, and looked down upon the Bosphorus, Suleiman's friends met at the tomb of Boshoku, not far from the house of Upsilon Kappa, the Greek, and they swore an oath that they would avenge their friend Suleiman. And they went to the house of the Greek, and considered how they should enter, for it was their decided intention to strangle Upsilon. But the doors were strong, and they were locked and barred. So they said, "It is the will of Allah," and they went home to bed.

But the next night, having provided themselves with a ladder, they came again; and placing the ladder against a window, they all began to climb up together. But the top man found the window closely barred; and while he meditated on the causes of things, the ladder snapped asunder with their weight, and they all came down with a run, and some were bruised. So they said, "It is the will of Allah," and they went home to bed.

But the third night they got a new ladder, and came again to the house of the Greek; and this time they ascended not, but said to Suleiman, "Sing outside the maiden's window—she will open it, and we will then rush in and strangle her father." And the idea seemed a happy one to Suleiman, and he crept up the ladder, and began to sing in a low voice the song disparaging the roses of Astrabad. But the maiden did not open the window; whereupon Suleiman, finding the broken pane, put his finger therein, but instantly withdrew it, covered with blood. The white antelope had taken his finger for something to eat, and had bitten it to the bone. And Suleiman flew into a dreadful rage,

and with his dagger wrenched open the window, and sprang into the chamber, whence the affrighted antelope hurried whinnying. And he looked round for Zamira, but could not see her in the moonlight, for she was not there.

And his friends mounted the ladder one by one and entered the chamber, and they began to search the house in order to find the Greek; but Suleiman searched for Zamira, for whom his heart still beat, notwithstanding that her father had shot off his turban and her antelope had bitten his finger, and he cared less about finding the Greek than for discovering his child. But fortune throws in our way that which we least expect; and as Suleiman was feeling his way along a passage, he kicked something in his path, and leaning down, he found it was Upsilon Kappa, who was sleeping on a mat at the door of a room in which he kept his treasure.

"I have no time to strangle you, dog," said Suleiman, "but take that;" and he stuck his dagger into Kappa, and sprang over him to continue his search for Zamira. Now Kappa had a way of sleeping which is not generally considered good for digestion, namely, curled up like a dog; but upon this occasion it proved very wholesome to him, for the attitude deceived Suleiman, whose dagger, instead of penetrating the old Greek's bosom, stuck into the small of his back, or thereabouts, and Upsilon uttered hideous cries. But Suleiman went on in his search for the maiden.

Now Zamira had been sent by her father to another chamber; and hearing the voice of the Greek, she awoke from an uneasy slumber, and snatching a lighted lamp, came out to see what had happened. The next moment she confronted the handsome young Turk, who stood

before her, dagger in hand. He seized her in his arms ; but she struggled violently, and called him the murderer of her father.

" But, beautiful Zamira," said Suleiman, " thou hearest thy father bawling like ten hundred devils, and men do not bawl when they are murdered." He again seized and sought to carry her off ; but the maiden was not lightly built, and he staggered with his burden, when the white antelope dashed between his legs, and he fell down with Zamira. In a moment she extricated herself from his hold, and hastened along the passages ; but it was only to fall into the gripe of his friends, who held her fast.

" Let us strangle *her*," said some of them ; " it will at least be doing something ;" and they sought for a cord or sash. And the maiden, now terrified, began to shriek ; and Suleiman, maddened at the sound, but not knowing his way in the darkness, stormed like a demon, as he screeched to his friends not to hurt Zamira.

But as he took turning after turning, eager to rescue her, his leg was seized by Upsilon Kappa, who had crawled along with some difficulty, holding one hand behind him, and now clutched Suleiman with a terrible tenacity. Zamira's shrieks grew louder and more agonising ; for the Turks had found a cord, and were endeavouring to fasten it round her neck ; and her protector was thus held by her father, who clung to him the more fiercely, vowing that he would have vengeance. At length came a last and piteous shriek from Zamira, and Suleiman, frantic with fury, dashed his dagger seven times into the bosom of the Greek, and at length extricated himself from the dead man's grasp. He hastened

onward to save his Zamira ; but he was too late—the cord had been tightened round the beautiful neck.

Suleiman took very little pleasure in his pipe for several days after that ; but he used to be seen wandering by the Bosphorus, leading a white antelope secured by a cord. No one but himself knew what that cord had done for the owner of the white antelope. The Sultan got the Greek's money.

“ Such was the story,” said the traveller, “ as you chose to have it ; but the authoress I speak of has made it far more sentimental. And now, if you please, I will go on with our united tale, which left me wandering about the hotel at Constantinople, on a certain morning of my residence there.

This morning, neither the American's black trousers, nor the Englishman's *gobemoucherie*, nor the authoress's simplicity, had any charms for me ; and when I had visited each of the four ballet-girls about a hundred times, I determined to go out. As I went down the steps into the sombre-looking enclosure which separates Misseri's from the filthy street, somebody rushed up them and begged me to stop. He was a fresh-coloured young fellow ; ugly enough, but very neat and clean ; and his coat, waistcoat, and trousers were all of grey, he also wore a grey cap and grey cloth boots.

“ A friar of orders grey ?” said the clergyman.

“ Not at all,” replied the other. “ A young English traveller, who, according to our custom, had invented a costume for himself.”

The gentleman's name—for why should I keep you in suspense ?—was Toddy Bopps.

He addressed me in a neat speech, the burden of

which was, that as we each knew the other's name only from the hotel-book, and had never been introduced, he was of course aware that in a civilised country he should not have been justified in doing more than stare at me had we thus met. But as this was Stamboul——

I begged to correct him—it was no such thing. If he affected to call places by their national names, he should know that this was not Stamboul, but Pera.

He was obliged by the correction, and, until he had re-considered the question, would compromise, and call the whole place Constantinople, as he had done all his life. Mr. Bopps then said that he had met with a most extraordinary adventure.

“A Turkish lady of rank has fallen desperately in love with you, and sent you a message by her confidential old woman?” I asked; as that is the usual story which every young gentleman who visits Constantinople has to tell, and believes, too, all his life, if he is lucky enough to leave the place without following up the adventure.

“Not precisely,” he replied, smiling and blushing.

“Toddy Bopps blush!” interrupted the President; “we must be talking of two persons. Toddy! why you might as well expect the gnarled bark of an old oak to blush.”

I speak of some years ago, said the other; and I give you my word that my narration is as faithful as your own. Bopps coloured up to the rim of his grey cap, and I saw that I had gone pretty near the mark. If I could be of any use, I said, I should be happy to forget I was an Englishman; and as we could easily cut one another when we met in Pall Mall, there was no such formidable danger to be incurred by our speak-

ing in Turkey. So he confided his tale to me. He had seen the loveliest creature upon whom eyes had ever rested: the sight had burst upon him from a window in Galata. His dragoman had, upon his urgent request, visited the house, and had brought back a report that the charmer of his soul was a Greek girl, of exquisite beauty, and of irreproachable morals, and who was, moreover, the daughter and sole heiress of a merchant who had at least a hundred tubs full of gold coins in his cellars, to say nothing of a thousand or more that he had placed for security in the vaults of the British ambassador. Now, Mr. Toddy said, and justly, this is a chance for a young man.

"Do you mean," I said, "that you are thinking of offering marriage?"

"Well," he said, "why not? She is a Greek certainly; but what of that? Lord Byron was in love with Mrs. Black, *née* Maid of Athens."

"Yes," said the President, "that *is* Toddy. An aristocratic precedent is all-powerful with him. Toddy loves a lord."

"Religion?" I asked, I hope without laughing.

He replied, very earnestly, that he had been looking into Murray's *Handbook*, and found that the Greek Church had many points in common with the Church of England.

"It has so," said the clergyman; "I will, if you please, mention them."

"The Greek lady has the *pas*," said the President; "we will come to the altar after her."

Finally—said the narrator—Mr. Bopps had made up his mind—what there was of it—to adventure for the hand of this lady. He had given himself out, through

his dragoman, as an Englishman of high rank and great wealth; and, rascals and romancers as these fellows are, they implicitly believe most of what the English tell them. The dragoman had reported his master's rank, wealth, and love, and had received a most encouraging answer. The dragoman, Antonio (an ill-favoured Italian, with an immense nose, who was always crying), was the ambassador, but Toddy had been allowed once more to see the lady at the window for a moment, but had been hurried away by Antonio, with a story that a jealous rival was waiting round the corner with a poisoned dagger. Bopps went home frightened, but delighted, and spent the evening in turning "Maid of Athens" into "Maid of Galata," with a new burden:

"Know'st thou who the question pops?

Zoe mou, it's Toddy Bopps."

The next day the confidential Antonio brought him word that the old Greek merchant was prepared to accept the suitor for his daughter's hand. Bopps then begged for an interview. He had been promised one, but having a kind of tremour about the poisoned dagger, and no great confidence in the valour of Antonio (who had been beaten two mornings running by one of the waiters at the hotel, and had only cried in return), he determined not to venture into the house without a friend. The dragoman did not seem, for some reason, to like my going, and he even hinted that my presence might offend the lady. But Toddy would not yield, and so Antonio did, and sulked all the way to the house. We were admitted, however, and soon stood in the room below which were imprisoned the hundred barrels of gold coins. The lady of Bopps's love was there—a rather handsome girl, if looked at from a respectful distance. We

bowed, and I rather dodged about the gloomy room to try to get a good view of her features, for, at the first glance, a recollection struck me; and as soon as I succeeded in adapting my eyes to the *demi-jour*, I was convinced that my memory had not deceived me.

"Will you not speak to the lady?" said Antonio to Toddy. "She is too bashful to say the first words."

"Tell her," began Toddy, in a tender voice, "that her image is for ever impressed upon my heart, and that the devotion of a life shall be my 'umble return for her affection."

"I will translate that amiable sentence for my friend," I said. And addressing the lady in Italian, (of which Bopps was as ignorant as any gentleman who ever cried *Bravo* to Grisi), "Well, Maria dearest, how does the rope-dancing please the Turks?"

Maria had recognised me in an instant, and had as instantly taken her course. Her answer, given in a low tone (which charmed Toddy, who conceived she was murmuring out her passion for his grey uniform), was,—

"I have never wronged you, and you were my friend in Pisa. Will you ruin me now?"

"Assuredly *not*," I said, earnestly. "Play your game, and win it if you can. This man is nothing to me; but he is not an English lord, Maria,—mind that."

"He is rich, Antonio says."

"Not too rich."

"Ah! according to your English notions; but he will do. Speak to him, or he will be jealous."

Toddy *was* wondering at our sustained conversation; he broke in: "What does she say?"

"That she already looks upon me as a friend—that she cares not for your wealth—but that she hopes you are not of a jealous disposition."

"I am sure she will never give me cause," said Bopps, much moved at this manifestation of interest.

I looked at Antonio, who had heard what had passed between Maria and me. He was perfectly livid with apprehension, and was grinding himself against the stone wall behind him.

"What's caught him?" said Bopps, in astonishment.

"A few words of praise in his own language. These foreigners are as sentimental as the deuce."

"Yes," said Bopps, conceitedly, "they are very easily worked upon. But I wish you'd say something more to the lady."

"I kiss her hand in your name," I said; and as I bent to do so, I whispered—

"Manage well; you have danced enough." Maria bent forward and kissed me; but it was done so quickly that Toddy could not see the action, my back being towards him.

"You are getting on excellently," I said, "and I must leave you. Remember," I added, going out, "that putting gold into tubs is a devilish unsound system of investment—wrong at the bottom, in fact; when you have got the money, talk to one of the Rothschilds."

"I will," said Toddy; and I went off.

What was the issue of the courtship I never learnt. This, however, I do know, that the matter would have been in an instant explained, when the Reverend Ambrosius repeated his demand of "Why?" and when Percy Wyndham had started up from the hassocks and exclaimed —

"Madam," said the President, addressing the lady who read Whately, "will you be kind enough to tell us what Mr. Percy Wyndham exclaimed?"

THE
LOGICAL LADY'S DEDUCTIONS.



“CERTAINLY,” she began, with a calm, cold, stony voice, and a face like the face of a Miss Martineau, as she might appear carved in wood, and forming the figure-head of a ship, belonging to a political economist. Indubitably,—she continued,—Mr. Percy Wyndham, who, when lying upon the hassocks, had

been mentally engaged in considering certain questions of political and social economy, and who, indeed, rose from his meditations a much wiser man than he sunk

down to them, at once replied that he had forbidden the banns, because he considered that the amount of surplus population in this country was already too great, and because, as a believer in the doctrines of the indefinite increase of population and the limited increase in the means of subsistence, he thought it his duty, generally, and without regard to individual cases, to forbid all banns which came within his hearing.

Upon this, Miss Sophy Paget cast an approving glance upon Mr. Percy Wyndham, and made a slight sign. It was a very slight sign; but he recognised it. There is in political economy a sympathy, a mysterious, mutual instinct, unknown to the un-Malthusian world. Her eyes darted figures; his eyes gleamed facts; and in a moment they understood each other.

"But," cried the Reverend Ambrosius, "this is not a marriage, but a christening."

"That has nothing to do with the principle," replied Percy Wyndham; "would you marry a man who had not been christened? Look at the syllogistic law. Major proposition: By the canon law, a person who has not been christened is not to be married. Minor ditto: But this baby must not be christened. Conclusion: Therefore this baby cannot be married.'"

"I see the force of the reasoning," sighed Sophy.

"Now then," exclaimed the uncultivated Bopps, "now then, here's a pretty kettle of fish! What have you to do with the baby, eh?"

"I have to do, sir," replied the philosophic and far-seeing Percy, "with the surplus population. I speak as a philosopher *in esse*, as a rate-payer *in posse*. Look here, sir, at the last poor-law return. By these returns ——"

"I don't," interrupted the illiterate Bopps, "care if you showed me a book of 'Latakia,' to say nothing of 'Returns.' I say you are a humbug!"

"Ladies and gentlemen,—ladies and gentlemen," pleaded the Reverend Ambrosius, "the conversation is quite uncanonical. I must really know who are the parents of this child."

"Show it to me! show it to me!" screamed a woman's voice from the entrance of the church.

The original christening-party stood aghast; while they were re-inforced by Mrs. Stump, the original owner of the invested twin; by Mr. Stump, the head clerk of the treacle-house in the city; and by Buffs & Co, the head of the house itself.

"Wonderful thing, that detective police!" grumbled Buffs & Co., rubbing down his forehead as he spoke. "Once on the scent, they go like bloodhounds. By their help we traced that sweet twin in its every movement since its investment in Mr. Toddy Bopps."

Meantime Sophy and Mrs. Stump had kissed each other, and Sophy had given up to Mrs. Stump the baby; and Mr. and Mrs. Stump were crying over it, and exclaiming, "Oh, my long-lost twin!"

"You, sir," cried the clergyman to Toddy, "are you not the father of the twins?"

"Do I look like a father of twins?" replied the young gentleman addressed; "do I look like a heavy father at all? No, old boy," and Toddy assumed a swaggering aspect, and whispered to the Rev. Ambrosius, "a bet, old fellow, a mere sporting transaction, that's all. I've lost in consequence of these old fogies hunting us up; but if you choose to come to supper to-night with a few fighting men at the 'Boxing Glove' ——"

The Hon. and Rev. Ambrosius staggered, but was supported by his clerk; after a pause, silence was broken by the clergyman. Turning to the actual parents, he remarked, with some truth, that the affair was rather mysterious, and inquired whether the child was to be christened there after all.

"Here!" exclaimed Stump; "here; and me a Dissenter—a conscientious hearer of the worthy Mr. Snuffle, of the little Muggletonian Chapel, Somers Town."

"What!" said the hon. and rev. gentleman; "what do I hear?" and instantly fell into strong convulsions. The women screamed.

Buff's & Co. strode up to Wyndham. "Sir," he said, "there is some foul play here. Give me back the hundred pounds I handed to you."

"Sir," replied Wyndham, calmly, "never! Refunding one hundred pounds is contrary to the very rudimentary principles of political economy."

He waved his hand to Sophy, and she took his arm. Toddy Bopps would fain have joined them, but she bade him stand back.

"You are beneath me," she muttered, "unlogical Bopps!"

Very soon the church was empty. The hon. and rev. was finishing his convulsions in the vestry; Buff's & Co. was consulting his solicitor as to how he could get back the hundred pounds made over to Percy; the progenitors of the twins were rejoicing over them in Somers Town; and Mr. Toddy Bopps, having paid the wager he had made on the steps of the Union Club, that he would have the baby sent to him christened by the name of Jupiter Bopps, was wandering disconsolately along the street, wondering where he had seen a face

somewhat like Sophy's,—who, by the way, had consented to enter into Mr. Bopps's plans, because she did not consider the christening the twin was likely to receive from Muggletonians as at all the orthodox thing,—he was wandering, I say, about the streets, when he perceived a placard hung up at the door of a well-known concert-room, with the following inscription:—

WOMEN NEVER WILL BE SLAVES!!

“The Rights of Woman, considered in relation to Political Economy and the Doctrine of Supply and Demand; with a recapitulation of the Wrongs of Woman from the time of Eve to that of Miss Martineau.”

A LECTURE—In Greek Costume (*trousers*).

By Miss JEMIMA ECONOMICA DIBBS.

THIS EVENING. COME EARLY.

Support the Rights of Woman!

NO MONEY RETURNED.

Somehow or other Mr. Toddy Bopps went in. At the pay-place he laid down his shilling; it was swept up by a hand with a ring upon it. Toddy Bopps knew that ring. He himself had given it to Percy Wyndham.

“Hillo!” he said, rousing up, and making a dive down to the pay-place hole in order to catch a glimpse of the occupant. “Hillo! who the devil have we here?”

He forcibly pushed an old gentleman aside by this sudden stooping movement; but he did recognise the personage who sat at the receipt of customs. Wonders on wonders, it was Percy Wyndham!

“Take up your check, sir, and go on,” said Percy, in a business tone.

"Hillo, I say! What! it aren't,—it can't be you, old feller!" he stammered.

"Of course it's me," replied Percy. "There's a general demand for intellectual lectures; here there's a special supply. I adjust the two, and—take the money;" and he swept Bopps's shilling into an open drawer.

"And—and Miss Jemima Economica Dibbs," cried Bopps in utter amazement, "who is she—she's not that strange, unaccountable Sophy?"

"Pass on and see," answered Percy.

So the wondering Bopps did pass on, and entered the lecture-room. It was about half full; and judging from the looks of the occupants, Bopps opined that the majority were orders. The style of head-dress of the ladies was marked less by the conventional features received every month from Paris, than by a stern and intellectual severity of mode, and an unpretending dinginess of colour.

But Toddy Bopps, if he had the inclination, had little time to estimate the moral and intellectual standard of the audience; for just as he sat down, from a side room there emerged upon the platform, led by a gentleman in a white neck-tie, white gloves, and shiny boots, and greeted by thunders of applause, the fair lectureress, in the fascinating garb—trousers—of the Ionian Isles.

Bopps stood transfixed. Heavens! could it be! The daughter of the rich Greek merchant, the eastern lady he had wooed, and who had suddenly disappeared on the eve of the marriage-day! It was supposed that she had been murdered by a rival; and Antonio, one day leading the weeping Bopps to the brink of the Golden Horn, showed him something floating in a

sack, which he said was the corpse of the Maid of Athens.

“God bless my soul!—a most tragical end,” said the travelled gentleman. “I took her for an Italian. She must really have deceived me.”

“Perhaps,” said the City man, “she went to the East, to do a stroke of business in Turkey carpets.”

“Or upon a pilgrimage,” observed the clergyman, “to the Holy Land, with staff and scrip and Drummond’s circular letters.”

“Or to investigate on the spot the qualities of genuine Turkey rhubarb.” This observation was from the gentleman with the heavy gold snuff-box; and as he spoke, he abstractedly removed from his coat-pocket, where it had got under him, the case of surgical instruments, and placed it more conveniently.

“Or,” slyly added the President, “to amuse herself by taking in wide-awake diplomatists.”

“At all events,” pursued the narrator, “Bopps saw his long-lost love, and in the long-lost love, Sophy Paget. In trousers, he remembered her in a minute.”

“Zoe mou!” shrieked Toddy Bopps, and then fell—”

The President held up his hand. “Our friend beside me will state into what he fell.”

And he indicated the gentleman with the case of surgical instruments.

MEDICAL GENTLEMAN'S DOSE.



HE medical gentleman smiled blandly on the company—one of those horrid cold smiles with lancets in them, which only medical gentlemen can give; and after pausing for a moment to collect his thoughts, proceeded—

Mr. Toddy Bopps fell into a—fit. Cries were at once raised, and most properly, for a medical man; and three young gentlemen who were engaged in the preliminary operation of walking the

hospitals, and who chanced to be present, at once stood forward. Owing, however, to their medical education not being at the period in an advanced state, they differed as to the nature of the fit. Mr. Jones of the Middlesex was of opinion that the patient was suffering from epilepsy; Mr. Brown of St. George's was clear that the

attack was paralytic ; and Mr. Smith of Guy's at once pronounced it apoplectic. However, all three agreed that they would bleed the gentleman for the sake of practice, a laudable habit among young medical men, and which contributes much to after-dexterity in using the lancet. The result was, that in a short time the patient, though very weak, was able to be lifted into a cab ; and the three young gentlemen held a consultation upon the case, I regret to say, at a neighbouring tavern, at which they ascertained that each had removed nine ounces of blood, to the great advantage of Mr. Bopps's system, which I have reason to believe was in a state of chronic inflammation, in consequence of dyspeptic irregularities, as well as functional derangement of the liver and the ganglionic nerves.

But it was not alone Mr. Bopps who that evening required the assistance of the faculty. Ten o'clock had just struck, when a cab might have been seen driving rapidly up Gower Street. Its occupant stretched his head out of window, and looking despairingly at the endless avenue of gas-lamps, urged the driver to make haste. At length they stopped. A lamp, green, blue, and red, gleamed above a door armed with a vast brass plate, inscribed Dr. Saltz, and flanked by the handle of the night-bell. The occupant of the cab jumped out, applied himself to the latter most lustily, and, on the door being opened, entreated the presence of Dr. Saltz immediately at an address which he handed in. Five minutes had not elapsed before the respectable practitioner was in the sick-room. The candles burned dimly in the close atmosphere, and the women of the family came and went, pale and alarmed, about the bed. The doctor saw at a glance that it was a young lady's

room, and he wondered to see a pair of Greek trousers lying upon a chair.

"Our poor dear Sophy, doctor," said the mamma, a portly lady between forty-nine and nineteen-twentieths and fifty, "has been so suddenly taken ill. She was out at tea with her aunt Deborah this evening, and indeed she passed nearly all day seeing some friends in the city and other places, and she was brought home in a cab and a high fever, and she's talking all sorts of nonsense that we cannot understand, about some Toddy Bopps, which her father says must be something to drink, and about a twin, and about a stroke in treacles, and about Constantinople and Turkey carpets, and political economy, and the rights of woman, and all sorts of nonsensical trash."

Meantime Sophy was flinging her wandering eyes all round. "Miss Sophy," said the doctor, "you know me; my child, put out your tongue."

"That you may cut it off, like the tongues of the mutes in Stamboul; oh, I know! Toddy believed I was sown up in a sack; but I wasn't. Ha! ha! ha! nobody who knew Sophy Paget would give the sack to her!"

"Oh, doctor, is it not dreadful to hear her run on so?" whispered the poor mamma.

"Never mind," said the doctor, soothingly; "we'll soon set her to rights."

"Rights!" exclaimed the patient, "rights! what I want are women's rights. Women never will be slaves! No money returned. Oh, Percy Wyndham!"

"Something soothing, composing; eh! dear doctor?—can't you give her something? It's so horrid these senseless wanderings; and oh, doctor, what is it, do you think—what sort of fever, eh?"

“Why, my dear madam, febrile disorders so nearly resemble each other at the onset, that at first they all seem positively twin complaints.”

“Who has any complaint to make about the twins? I have had no twins, and I don’t mean to have twins. It’s an aspersion to say I have any thing to do with twins, except to save them from Muggletonianism.”

“I declare,” said the doctor, “I declare that I never in all my life heard such strange wanderings.”

Sophy got up in her bed, and flung herself into a reclining attitude. Then twisting her poor swollen features into a smile, she declaimed,—

“Oh, swear not by the moon—the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest thy love too prove variable.”

“I think I have heard that sentiment in a pantomime, or something theatrical, when I was a student,” observed the doctor. “But active measures must be taken, and we’ll break down the fever. It has not got it’s hold yet, and by the exhibition of ——”

“We’ll take the prescription for granted,” observed the President.

The prescription in question had hardly been written out, when, after a thundering rap at the door, up came a message that the doctor’s services were wanted in another quarter; and off went the doctor to his new patient, who was a gentleman occupying handsome rooms in a West-end club-chambers establishment. The door of a luxurious apartment opening, discovered to the doctor a gentleman, pale and excited, wrapped in an emblazoned dressing-gown, and flung at full length upon a sofa, amid heaps of newspapers, French vaude-



villes, boxing-gloves, prints of ballet-girls, and play-bills, and holding in his hand a slate.

"What! Percy Wyndham!" exclaimed the doctor. "Why, what on earth made you take it into your head to get ill?"

"Ah, eh, ih, oh, uh!" moaned the patient.

"Why the devil don't you speak?" exclaimed Dr. Saltz.

Percy immediately wrote upon the slate,—

"Because I have got the locked-jaw."

"Trismus: a decided and most interesting case of trismus," exclaimed Dr. Saltz. "Have any means been taken?"

"Yes," Percy wrote on the slate before him; "I tried to open my jaw with a corkscrew, but, I could not, nor with the poker neither."

"Strong measures must at once be adopted, Mr. Wyndham," said the doctor. "I shall put a blister all over your back, another all over your front, and one round each leg from the hip to the ankle, so that you will soon be quite comfortable."

Percy Wyndham groaned aloud, and wrote: "It is the result of agitation produced by that damned twin."

"A twin again!" thought the doctor. But hardly had the necessary instructions been given, when a red-hot messenger arrived for the doctor. He was wanted at Somers Town, at a Mr. Stump's; and to Somers Town accordingly the doctor went as fast as a Hansom could carry him. Up in the nursery of their humble dwelling knelt Mr. and Mrs. Stump weeping over the twins. They had both been seized by the croup, and were crowing like two young cocks.

"Oh, deary me! deary me!" wailed Mrs. Stump;

“it’s all along of one of them getting cold and giving it to the other. I’ll never let my twins go out of my sight for the future.”

“They will cry so, sir,” said Mr. Stump. “I’ve tried to pacify them, sir, by spoonfuls of the best molasses from our own stores, sir, in the City. But it’s no use; they will crow so out of their dear little throats.”

“Never mind, never mind,” said the doctor, soothingly. “Twins again! twins!—we’ll soon set our little friends to rights. Bless my soul! the very finest children I ever saw in all my life, and the very image of their parents. Pray, how old are they?”

“Six weeks and three days to-morrow,” answered the weeping matron.

“Only that!” exclaimed the doctor, with great surprise; “I positively took them for three months’ children. As I told you, I never saw such babies in all my life.” And he hurried off to the vestry of St. Buffer’s, whither he had just been summoned, and where the Honourable and Reverend Ambrosius still remained, attended by the pew-opener and the clerk, and still in a state of great depression from the shock which his feelings had received by the announcement that the twin was to be christened by the Muggletonians.

“Of what do you complain, my dear sir?” said the doctor, mildly.

“Of Muggletonianism,” faintly responded the pale and worn-out ecclesiastic.

The doctor paused, for the disease appeared to him to be a new one; and he ran over in his mind a number of uncommon maladies, beginning with elephantiasis, and ending with plica polonica.

“In what region,” at length he inquired; “the lumbar or the epigastric?”

“Neither,” replied the patient; “in the region of Somers Town.”

Dr. Saltz was for a moment nonplussed, but his quick medical wit availed him.

“What were the attendant symptoms?” he inquired.

“Attending,” answered the patient,—“attending the so-called ministrations of the so-called Reverend Mr. Snuffle.”

Dr. Saltz was a member of the College of Surgeons, but he was not Œdipus.

“What *is* the matter?” he inquired of the clerk and the pew-opener.

“It’s the etrodoxy as works hupon ’is feelins,” replied the former.

“Rubbage,” replied the latter; “it’s all along of a twin.”

“Of a twin!” The case was more mysterious than ever. At length the doctor risked his advice.

“I would reecomend,” he said, “an embrocation.”

“No, no,” muttered the patient; “a commination. A commination is the thing for Muggletonianism.”

But the doctor, ventured to say—perhaps a little at random—“Well, then, we will exhibit a commination at once.” And he sat down and wrote a simple prescription for a soothing draught, while the Hon. and Rev. Ambrosius lay on the sofa murmuring unintelligible arguments against Muggletonianism.

“Here it is,” said the doctor.

“What?” cried the patient.

“The combination, sir,” said the clerk.

“Read it, then,” replied the patient, “as on the first day of Lent.”

“I can’t read it, sir; it’s all Latin and funny

scratches," replied the functionary; "but I'm a-going to have it made up at the druggist's round the corner."

"Make up a commination!" moaned the hon. and rev.; but the pew-opener assuring him that it was all right, and a messenger running frantically in with an express summons for the doctor, the latter, who was, sooth to say, glad to get off from such a puzzling case, slipped away with his summoner.

"What is it?" said Dr. Saltz.

"Buffs & Co.," replied the messenger.

"Which? Buffs or Co.?" inquired the doctor.

"Both," was the answer. "Buffs is Co., and Co. is Buffs."

In twenty minutes the doctor was inside the one house, and by the bed-side of the other "House." Buffs & Co. had a terrific fit of the gout.

"In both my legs and both my arms," he groaned; "and in my head, my feet, my shoulders, and the small of my back."

Dr. Saltz spoke to him soothingly.

"It is all," cried Buffs & Co., "brought on by my anxiety for that cursed twin!"

Dr. Saltz started bodily back. "There is a dreadful twin," he exclaimed, "a horrid, mysterious twin, who is afflicting all London with aches and pains. There is something strange passing; something uncommon; something extraordinary; something to be finally cleared up—"

"Will the young lady beside the window," interrupted the President, "be good enough to perform the final clearing-up process?"

THE
YOUNG LADY'S CONTRIBUTION.



H ! what a shame !
exclaimed the pretty
lady, laughing. “
declare I am the only
one who has not spo-
ken. You don’t mean
to ask me to finish the
story?”

“ We have reserved
your contribution as
a concluding *bonne
bouche*,” said the Pre-
sident ; “ and, you
know, all’s well that
ends well.”

“ Well,” replied the
young lady, musing,
and pinching into a
point the tip of one of
her exceedingly well-

fitting gloves ; “ I declare I don’t know how.—May I
say exactly what I think ?”

"Else wherefore breathe we in a Christian land?" asked the theatrical lady; while a chorus of "Certainly, *pray* do," burst from the other six travellers.

"Then," said the young lady, colouring a little at pronouncing judgment, "I think that what might have been a very nice story has been spoiled, quite spoiled; and if it could only have been written down, every body who read it would agree with me. I do not say this for the sake of saying something clever, because I am not clever at all; but I read a great many novels, and I know what sort of story-telling pleases people. We began very pleasantly; and Percy Wyndham was a very good sort of hero, and his waiting for a lady was all *selon les règles*. But to go and make him ridiculous directly, was beginning wrong. Of course, when he was in a scrape, he had to get out of it; but why didn't he go into a shop, and wait till a policeman could be found to take the baby to the next workhouse? Don't tell me that a man of the world would be embarrassed by such a trick.

"Well, then, as for the young lady dealing in City speculations, *that* was a good idea too; but it should have been worked out. Then, if you had brought in Sophy's father, a pale, dark-eyed man, the perfect soul of honour, but embarrassed from having forged his friends' names to cheques, or some little commercial irregularity of that kind, whose fortunes Sophy was labouring to restore; and thus made her lover suspect her, and she too proud to explain:—that would have been interesting, and very like something I lately read.

"This lady's theatrical story I am no great judge of; but certainly she ought to have made Percy come out as Romeo (he would have looked a darling in the black

velvet!), and then, when the whole house was in thunders of applause, and the critics were saying that even Charles Kean was scarcely his superior, the sound of Sophy's voice in the love-scenes should have been too much for him, and he should have fallen down, his beautiful forehead all pale, and his lips articulating 'Sophy!' involuntarily. I read such a scene in a German story, and I thought it very good.

"I won't presume to offer an opinion on this gentleman's part of the tale," continued the young lady, looking to the clergyman,—“because I am sure he knows what is right better than a girl like me; but I think that flowers, and music, and incense, and pictures in churches are most delightful, and quite right, and very much help the feeling of sentiment in religion.”

The clergyman looked as if he liked the speaker's intention better than her advocacy; but he said nothing. The young lady proceeded:

“But I have no patience with people,” looking to the travelled gentleman, “who make fun of the darling East, and try to make out that Constantinople is not a bit more romantic than Chelsea. Mr. Thackeray (whom I'll never forgive) set that bad example; and Albert Smith (who once had some romance in him) is just as mischievous. And you ought to be the more ashamed of yourself,” she continued, “because that scene where the beautiful girl on the carpet was recognised by you, and you preserved her secret, shows that you have a taste for plots.”

“Perhaps I have,” said the travelled gentleman, laughing; “I will try and cultivate it for the future, after your kind encouragement.”

Evidently afraid of the strong-minded lady, the fair

critic passed over that portion of the narrative *sans phrase*, and added:

“And as for that horrid chapter, in which every body has been made ill, I declare it’s too dreadful to think of; and now every body is handed over to me to be cured.”

“The faculty does not believe in specifics as a rule,” said the medical gentleman, gallantly; “but some charms are all-powerful.”

“Oh, I dare say,” returned the young lady, smiling. “However, I will do my best.

“The incessant attentions of his medical attendant would have done little for the recovery of Percy Wyndham; for who can minister to a mind diseased, or pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow?”

“My dear young lady,” said the doctor, “you are casting an undue slight on the profession. We prescribe neither for minds nor memories, but for stomachs and livers, and——”

“Ah! don’t begin that horridness again,” exclaimed the young lady, “or I shall never be able to tell my story. I tell you that the stupid, bigoted, tiresome doctor, then, could do nothing for him, and he was wasting away into a premature grave, when one morning, as he was in the last stage of consumption, and you could see through his beautiful aristocratic hand, as if it had been a sheet of ivory, a perfumed little note was brought him, in which were the words ‘*Live for me!*’ traced in a delicate female writing, like that of one who was slowly recovering from severe indisposition. He sprang from his couch, rushed to all the Inns of Court, became a barrister in every one of them, studied for nights and nights, pleading causes all day long, and winning every

one of them, and in less than three months was made a Peer of the Realm, Revising Barrister, Usher of the Central Criminal Court, and Solicitor-General. In the meantime, Sophy, regaining her beauty——”

“Come, I am glad that *her* medical attendant was luckier,” said the doctor. “I can understand a man in the last stage of consumption being cured by three words; but her complaint was——”

“I don’t want to know what it was,” said the lady; “and her doctor, who was just as tiresome and stupid and ignorant as Percy’s, could not guess at it at all; but said it was something inwardly, and gave her opodeldoc pills and alicampagne poultices, without doing her the least tiny little bit of good. There now! But one day she found in a forgotten crochet work-box some poetry of poor Percy’s, and from that she derived a great deal of benefit; and her cure was effected by a letter from him saying that there was a change of Ministers, that he had been made Lord Chancellor, and was going down to his native place to be elected a Member of Parliament. The contest was tremendous; every engine of bribery and intimidation was put in play against Percy, and even soldiers were sent in to run their bayonets into any body who voted for him. But his charming person and lovely eloquence carried all before him, and he was returned for his dear little native borough by a majority of many hundred thousands over all the other candidates.

“In the meantime Mr. Toddy Bopps had been using every endeavour to ascertain the history of her whom he had known in Constantinople as Maria, and who had also appeared at the lecture-room. Fortunately his difficulties, which seemed insuperable, were cleared up by a letter which came to his club one day,

slightly stained with blood, but otherwise not remarkable. It was from Spain. Antonio, who, it seems, was a Jesuit of the blackest dye, had gone to Madrid, and while there had been suspected of being untrue to his order. He was immediately put to the most hideous tortures, which terminated in his death; but before he expired, he wrote a letter to Toddy Bopps, which the Jesuits forwarded very kindly to the Union Club. In this he explained that Maria was Sophy's twin-sister, and remarkably like her; and this accounted for all mistakes, Maria being as energetic and adventurous as Sophia was delicate, shrinking, modest, yet firm, resolute, and spirited, and, in short, all that a lady should be. Antonio further stated that Maria was entitled to an immense fortune, kept from her by the Order of Jesus, whose servant he had been; but he enclosed a little key, which he instructed Toddy how to use.

“Toddy Bopps lost no time in seeking Maria, and they went together to make use of the key sent by the dying Antonio. It opened a great iron box which had for many years been used as a counter in one of the lowest shops in the most horrible district of London, and had never been supposed to contain any thing. The proprietor, a marine store-keeper, refused to let it be taken away, when he found it was full of gold; but on the story being related to him, he burst into tears, and helped with his own hands to put the box into a cab, thus showing that there is a remainder of good at the bottom of the hearts of those whom we think worthless. I need not add that Maria and Toddy were married. How the gold got into the box, or the box into the shop must remain mysteries, which may seem less singular than the fact of either gold or box getting into Maria's

possession. Had Antonio's life been spared, he could, doubtless, have made important revelations ; but such is priestcraft.

“ The ‘ House ’ prospered, and would have become wealthy ; but one morning the Muggletonian Stump let in a gang of housebreakers, who robbed the ‘ House ’ of all it possessed. They were all caught and executed ; and Stump, whom they had defrauded of his share in the booty, threw himself from the top of the Monument. His widow soon followed him.”

“ What ! ” asked the doctor ; “ to the top of the Monument and over the rail ? ”

“ No, no,” said the young lady, but to the bourne from whence —— in fact, into the silent tomb ; and the twins were left to the mercy of a cold world. But the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb ; and in those unprotected babies may now be recognised the active and spangled Acrobats who are making a fortune by their performance as the Boneless Brothers of Baraconda.

“ Mr. Footlights is now a country manager, cheats his own actors whenever there is any money to cheat them of, and complains bitterly of the Dramatic Authors' Copyright Act, justly remarking, that after a London manager has paid for a piece, a country manager has a right to steal and hack it. He is also very pathetic on the declining state of the legitimate drama.”

“ I ought to have given that description,” said the theatrical lady ; “ but I see you have made good use of your powers of observation.”

“ I have, I think, only to add, that the Reverend Ambrosius recovered of all his complaints. He was cured by reading a pamphlet by the Bishop of the city, the smoke of which I see in the distance ; a pamphlet in

which his Grace satisfactorily proved that nothing would ever be done properly in England until we had a parliament of parsons. The Reverend Ambrosius was so delighted, that he shook off all his disorders, and began to study St. Athanasius, in order that, should he be elected to such a parliament, he might come out with good shashing replies to his antagonists. He was interrupted, however, very early by an invitation to 'assist' the Archbishop of Canterbury in marrying Percy Wyndham (now Lord Chancellor and Member of Parliament) to Sophy Paget. The nuptials were celebrated at St. George's, Hanover Square, and the wedding-breakfast was splendid in the extreme. It passed off with the utmost *éclat*; and when the happy pair departed in their beautiful travelling-carriage, and the enchanted Percy folded his blushing bride to his bosom, he fondly whispered in her ear"—

"TICKETS, IF YOU PLEASE!"

Another voice had taken up the narrative, and our First-Class party were in Exeter.

A CARD.

If but one set of travellers, prompted by this faithful history, shall beguile the way after similar or improved fashion, we trust they will not forget to forward to the authors of this book (care of the publisher) some favourite production of the locality to which their transit shall have been smoothed. And if a great many sets of travellers do so, all we can say is—so much the better.

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